

**MODEL SCHOOLS - MODEL TEACHERS?**  
**THE MODEL SCHOOLS AND TEACHER TRAINING**  
**IN NINETEENTH CENTURY IRELAND**

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requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**Declaration:**

*I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of a Ph.D. in Humanities, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.*

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## Abstract

A study of model school preparatory training institutes in mid-nineteenth-century Ireland involves, by way of background, tracing government awareness of the need for regulation and training of teachers. This stemmed from concern that education - then viewed as a powerful agent for either good or evil - be in the hands of those whose loyalty was beyond question and who were capable of effectively imparting it. The alarm with which the rapidly increasing number of 'hedge' schools was viewed by the authorities and the degree of suspicion in which their teachers were held made this a most pressing matter. More immediately, this study seeks to examine the rationale behind the favouring by the National Board of Education of the model school matrix for teacher training as developed by the Kildare Place Society, to detail the problems that had to be addressed in order to put in place a country-wide network of model schools, and, primarily, to assess the impact of these schools as preparatory training institutes.

From its inception in 1831 the Board was anxious to raise the standard of teaching and teacher in all schools connected with it. From the last quarter of the eighteenth century, government disquiet over the rising demand for elementary education and its perceived potential to destabilise society prompted the search for a regulatory body that would oversee the development of an extensive school network under an acceptable system of local management, offering a curriculum that would, on the one hand, satisfy the demand of the masses, and, on the other, promote satisfaction with their lot. In this scheme of things the role of the teacher was seen as crucial.

Government confidence in the voluntary Kildare Place Society to superintend such a network proved to be misplaced. An illiberal stance on the part of a controlling element within the Society led to a fuelling of religious suspicions. However, its successor, the government appointed National Board of Education was quite happy to adopt much of its underlying philosophy which drew heavily on the approach of Joseph Lancaster, to avail of the services of some of its personnel, and to build on its achievements. This was particularly the case with respect of the approach to teacher training to which the model school was regarded as indispensable.

The very success of the national system quickly highlighted the inadequacies of the Board's early provision for training - a central residential training institute in Dublin for practising teachers - and prompted the development of a country-wide network of model schools with the aim of providing a preparatory course of training for candidate teachers. Lack of funds and the failure to establish the Board as a corporate entity delayed the implementation of this objective until 1846. Over the next twenty years the establishment of this network was influenced by a number of factors, both internal and

external. Difficulties of a practical nature encountered by the Board from the outset, particularly its inability to control costs, meant that progress was much slower than was originally planned. Gathering Roman Catholic clerical opposition, focusing on the Board's failure to provide a role in management for any but its own officers, eventually denied the model schools the support of many of its laity, and skewed their final geographical distribution towards Ulster and the larger urban areas outside of that province.

Candidate teachers in the model schools were either pupil teachers or paid monitors. The former were invariably males and boarded in the schools under the supervision of the headmasters. Paid monitors were predominantly females and resided in the neighbourhood of the schools. Those seeking selection for either office were expected to meet exacting moral and academic requirements. The preparatory training programme received generous funding, was detailed in its content, and its impartation was closely monitored. But its inherent imbalance - favouring the candidate's academic advancement over practical competence as a teacher - tended to undermine its very function. This, when combined with the lowly status then accorded the national teacher and, from 1863, the hostile attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to all aspects of the Board's training programme, called into question not only the effectiveness of the preparatory training but its very *raison d'être*.

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Arch.Hib.</i>	<i>Archivium Hibernicum</i>
C.E.S.	Church Education Society
C.N.E.I.	Commissioners of National Education in Ireland
D.M.S.	District Model School
<i>E.S.A.</i>	<i>Educational Studies Association</i>
K.P.S.	Kildare Place Society
<i>I.E.S.</i>	<i>Irish Educational Studies</i>
<i>I.H.S.</i>	<i>Irish Historical Studies</i>
<i>I.J.S.</i>	<i>Irish Journal of Education</i>
<i>M.C.N.E.I.</i>	<i>Minutes of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland</i>
M.M.S.	Minor Model School
N.A.I.	National Archives of Ireland
N.B.E.	National Board of Education
N.L.I.	National Library of Ireland

## Introduction

The report in 1870 of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (the Powis Commission) is rightly seen as a watershed in the development of elementary education provision in Ireland. That is not to say that it prompted a radical change in the national system that had been inaugurated in 1831. Rather, it was its acknowledgement that its attempt to put in place a 'united' or mixed denominational education system had failed. At the level of the ordinary national school - of which there were then approximately 6,500 - this was just a belated acceptance that the practical working of the system bore little or no relation to the aspirational principle of separate religious and combined secular and moral instruction on which it was supposed to function. Even the country-wide network of model schools was deemed to have failed. These were intrinsically different to other national schools in that they were under the exclusive control of the government appointed National Board of Education. Though few in number - reaching twenty-nine at their peak when one includes the Dublin Central Model School - the manner in which they were managed and the role they were expected to fill meant they were accorded a disproportionate significance by all interested parties. In their case, the recommendation of the Royal Commission was unambiguous: '... the existing provincial model schools should be gradually discontinued'.<sup>1</sup> This signalled the end of an initiative that the Commissioners of National Education, with no small degree of pride, had declared in 1846, would see 'the general machinery of our system ... approach ... completion'.<sup>2</sup>

These model schools were established over a period of two decades with the tripartite object of '[promoting] united education, [exhibiting] improved methods of literary and scientific instruction, and [training] young persons for the office of teacher'.<sup>3</sup> They failed to promote united education - though this had little to do with the practical management of the schools - due, in the main, to the opposition of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to its exclusion from a role in management. Nor could they be described as effective exemplars, since they bore little resemblance to ordinary national schools in terms of the social origins of the pupils they attracted, the extent of the curriculum taught, the disproportionate amount of funding available, their preferential teacher/pupil ratio, and the superior salary and more favourable conditions of employment afforded the teachers fortunate to obtain positions in them.

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<sup>1</sup>*Royal commission of inquiry, primary education, Ireland*, (hereinafter cited as *Powis*), i., 531.

<sup>2</sup>*Thirteenth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1846*, [832], H.C. 1847, xvii, p. 13 (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Thirteenth report ... 1846*).

<sup>3</sup>*Powis*, i, pt. 2, 737.

It is with regard to the third object - their preparatory training function - that this study is primarily concerned. It seeks to situate these model schools within the framework of the overall attempts to impose regulation on the appointment of teachers, to impart the training necessary for effective teaching, and to instil in trainees a proper sense of civic duty. This necessitates an examination of the factors that led the government to move from a position where it was content to entrust the responsibility of elementary education to the clergy of the Established Church to one of active intervention, initially through the annual funding of the Society for the Promotion of the Education of the Poor of Ireland (the Kildare Place Society), and, from 1831, through the establishment of a national system under the supervision of a voluntary, but government appointed, Board of Commissioners.

In respect of regulation, the emphasis was decidedly on permitting entry only to those that satisfied the moral requirements deemed necessary in a teacher. The primary aim was to remove teaching from the realm of the self-appointed private educator and to bring it under government control. The acknowledged power of education as a formative agent of social, religious and civil attitudes made this an imperative. Not only through regulation could the dissemination of ideas hostile to the interests of the state be countered, but the values bonding the existing social order could be mediated by the teacher. By the end of the eighteenth century this belief in the positive power of education, when it was regulated and controlled, was in the process of supplanting an earlier fear of its capacity to subvert. Bishop John Law of Elphin (1795-1810) set the issue in stark terms:

Education makes all the difference between wild beasts and useful animals, all the distinction between the Hottentot and the European, between the savage and the man.<sup>4</sup>

The mid-nineteenth century English reformer, W.B. Hodgson, was more circumspect. He observed that 'the inconveniences of total darkness were more and more recognised and the advantage of at least a sort of twilight state of mind was more and more perceived', yet his willingness to question 'whether the noonday blaze of knowledge was not more dreaded by the educational patrons of the lower classes than even the midnight blackness of total ignorance' indicates that he was not wholly convinced.<sup>5</sup> In Ireland, as elsewhere, it would appear that a compromise operated in practice. The academic curriculum was intended to impart little more than functional literacy and numeracy to the vast majority of the poor, and was set within a larger ideological mission whose object was to affirm an appreciation and acceptance of the immutability

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<sup>4</sup>Quoted by Richard Lovell Edgeworth in *Fourteenth report from the commissioners of the board of education in Ireland*, H.C. 1812-13, App. No. 3, p. 341.

<sup>5</sup>Quoted in M. Sturt, *The education of the people - a history of primary education in England and Wales in the nineteenth century* (London, 1967), p. 2.



of the existing social order. Its importance as a tool in moulding the attitudes of the multitude towards the state was central to its worth. Its ever pervasive and multi-faceted nature sought, as Andy Green has observed, to encompass not only the practical apparatus of government pertaining to the 'public' realm, 'but also the formation of ideologies and collective beliefs which legitimate state power and underpin concepts of nationhood and national character'.<sup>6</sup>

While the employment of terms 'nationhood' and 'national' are hardly apposite with reference to government policies in nineteenth-century Ireland, Green's assessment still holds. Indeed, set against the background of the Act of Union - the compliance of the masses and their acceptance of the legitimacy of external control was of even more relevance. In securing and maintaining co-operation, the role of the teacher, as Gramsci has identified it, was crucial. The task of the teacher, as an agent of the state, was to assist in consolidating its hegemony through winning the consent of the masses whose interests it clearly opposed. He numbered teachers among those intellectual groups that could promote the state's view of the world and influence civil society at large to accept the ideology of the dominant class. It was obvious in Ireland, from the closing quarter of the eighteenth century that the popular demand for elementary education would be satisfied with or without state involvement. Therefore, government interference in the selection of teachers and its determination of their role, formed a necessary part of the process in the development of a 'commonsense' ideology. This involved breaking with the traditional domination of teaching by the Established Church - an involvement that had not only conspicuously failed to win the support of the majority, but had the effect of arousing extreme hostility to all projects in which it was involved. By association, it made more remote the attachment of the majority to government. This alienation of Roman Catholics and Dissenters, in the field of education, achieved its most vivid expression through the proliferation of private 'pay' schools run by masters, who, in many instances, were of questionable ability, integrity and loyalty. Undoubtedly these were particular factors that led to government intervention in Ireland at an earlier date than in Britain itself. This initiative was pursued vicariously through the Kildare Place Society. The difficulties encountered by the voluntaryists proved beyond their capacity to overcome and made it incumbent on the state, out of self-interest, to become directly involved in the provision of education.

Given the crucial role of the teacher, it was logical that the state should primarily base its selection criteria on moral rectitude, conformity and loyalty, with academic standards of secondary importance. An acceptance of the need for formal training lagged behind

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<sup>6</sup>Andy Green, *Education and state formation - the rise of educational systems in England, France and the USA* (London, 1990), p. 29.

that of regulation. An appreciation of its worth had to await the development of a well-defined system of instruction that was cheap and efficacious. When it arrived, the mastery of method made training an absolute prerequisite. The earliest training for teachers was that provided by the Kildare Place Society. Due to the demand for entry and the finite nature of the resources available, such training as was given was extensive neither with respect to the length of the course nor the academic development of the teacher. The limited time available was given over to the acquisition of method and an inculcation into the active promotion of the ideological tenets of the ruling class. These training shortcomings and the rigid hierarchical view of society were inherited by the national system.

The requirement that the teacher uphold the dominant ideology was absolute, with him expected to take an active part in its defence and promotion. The government expectation was that a teacher's conduct and influence would be 'beneficial in promoting morality, harmony, and good order, in the country parts of Ireland'. The commissioners were only too happy to concur with this assumption and assured the lord lieutenant that their influence would not be confined to the precincts of their schools, but:

identified in interest with the State, and therefore anxious to promote a spirit of obedience to lawful authority, we are confident that they would prove a body of the utmost value and importance in promoting civilisation and peace.<sup>7</sup>

The Commissioners of National Education appreciated the difficulties that could arise if the distance between the teacher and the people became too great and proposed that the civic role of the teacher could be best carried out and 'the beneficial effects of their influence' most felt when he '[lived] in friendly habits with the people; not greatly elevated above them, but so provided for as to be able to maintain a respectable station ...'.<sup>8</sup> Poor remuneration ensured that throughout the period covered by this study there was little likelihood of the teacher being 'greatly elevated' above the people for whom the national schools were intended.

The shortcomings in the training programme were readily acknowledged by the commissioners and a means of redress was sought. Early efforts were hampered by the same factor that determined the approach of the Kildare Place Society - the sheer number of untrained teachers coupled with an inadequate training capacity. Initially,

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<sup>7</sup>*Second report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland, for the year ending 31 March 1835, H.C. 1835 [300], xxxv, p. 17* (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Second report ... 1835*). For comparison with the prevailing attitudes in France and Prussia one can profitably consult Barnett Singer, *Village notables in nineteenth century France - priests, mayors, schoolmasters* (Albany, 1983) and Anthony J. LaVopa, *Prussian schoolteachers - profession and office, 1763-1848* (Chapel Hill, 1980).

<sup>8</sup>C.N.E.I., *Second report ... 1835*, p. 17.

they concentrated on providing training at the Central Training Establishment in Dublin for those already practising. This was never envisaged as being anything more than an interim measure. While efforts were made to address the problem through the enlargement of the intake into training and the extension of a system of monitorships from the Central Model School to suitable ordinary national schools, it was only with the adoption of an ambitious scheme of district model schools in the 1840s capable of providing up to 256 trained pupil teachers annually that the National Board of Education grew confident that the problem of untrained teachers could be overcome.

The venture of the Board into the provision of schools under its exclusive management necessitated significant administrative and educational expansion. The issues needing to be addressed embraced deciding on location, dealing with legal difficulties, assessing tenders, awarding contracts and monitoring progress. Educationally, the Board's inspectorate were required to frame regulations governing staff selection, curriculum content, the appointment of junior staff, professional and domestic arrangements, appraisal and reporting. The early response was encouraging and for a time it must have seemed as if the country would indeed eventually have a comprehensive network of model schools and that the Board's aim of banishing the spectre of the untrained teacher would be realised. But substantial cost over-runs and mounting Roman Catholic clerical opposition frustrated the achievement of the grand plan. The effect was to skew the geographical distribution of the model schools towards protestant Ulster. The widespread active hostility of the Roman Catholic Church to teacher training in all model schools from 1863 onwards complicated matters, so much so, that it was claimed as late as 1868 that it would take twenty-one years to replace the five thousand untrained teachers that were still in the system.<sup>9</sup> As matters stood at the time, this claim was presumptuous. A more sober assessment of the effectiveness of the model schools as centres of teacher training, and the religious and economic factors that came into play form the core of this study.

Very little has been written on teacher training in general under the national system, nor on the particular performance of individual model schools. Ó Héideáin's *National school inspection in Ireland - the beginnings* is the most notable exception. Barnes's *Irish industrial schools 1868-1908* falls outside the time-scale of this study, and, in any event, such schools were not under the control of the National Board of Education. John A. McIvor's study of popular education and the attitude of the Presbyterian Church, while it adds little to our knowledge of model schools, sketches out the arrangements for training at the Central Training College in Marlborough Street, as does Thomas J.

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<sup>9</sup>Powis, iv, 1063.

Durcan's account of the Board's efforts at manual instruction.<sup>10</sup> A number of individual model schools have been the subject of study, but of these, only that by Lorcan Walsh on Trim model school addresses the question of teacher training in any detail.<sup>11</sup> Other works, especially that of John Logan, while not specifically concerned with teacher training, are informative in that they deal with curriculum, text books and method.<sup>12</sup> Robin Wylie's engaging investigation of Ulster model schools, while it contains much useful incidental information, is primarily an architectural study.<sup>13</sup> Of the general works on Irish education history under the national system, the tension between the Board and the major religious denominations - particularly the Roman Catholic Church - tends to dominate to the exclusion of consideration of the operation of the system as a whole. This is not a criticism, merely a recognition of the fact that a system that was intended to operate on the basis of inter-denominational co-operation very rapidly, for all but the model schools and a number under lay patronage, functioned in a diametrically opposing manner. This fixation with the religious issue has led to the treatment of model schools, when addressed, being located in the overall conflict between the Board and the Roman Catholic Church. Little or no attempt has been made to evaluate them from the point of view of the education imparted or the training undertaken. For example, the religious question dominates Ignatius Murphy's work on primary education to the almost total exclusion of educational issues.<sup>14</sup> Even Akenson's magisterial writing on the operation of the national system during the nineteenth century employs the changing relationship between the Board and the churches as his narrative framework.<sup>15</sup> His treatment of the model schools, while substantial and lucid, rarely strays beyond the politico-religious domain. The thesis of Susan Parkes on teacher training in Ireland, beginning with the efforts of the Kildare Place Society in 1811 and concluding with the Powis Report of 1870, with its extensive assessment of the model school operation, is

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<sup>10</sup>John A. McIvor, *Popular education in the Irish Presbyterian Church* (Dublin, 1969); Thomas Joseph Durcan, *History of Irish education from 1800, with special reference to manual instruction* (Bala, North Wales, 1972).

<sup>11</sup>James F. Collins, 'Dunmanway district model school - a brief history of a brave adventure', *Bandon Historical Journal*, 16 (2000), pp 39-58; Joseph Doyle, 'Kilkenny district model school', *Old Kilkenny Review*, 51 (1999), pp 50-74; Michael V. Spillane, 'Two centuries of popular education - an historical survey of the educational institutions of Limerick, 1700 - 1900', *Proceedings of the education conference* (University College Galway, 1976), pp 59-63; Lorcan Walsh, 'The Trim model schools', *Irish Educational Studies*, v, 2, (1985), pp 261-82.

<sup>12</sup>John Logan, 'The dimensions of gender in nineteenth-century schooling' in Margaret Kelleher and James H. Murphy (eds), *Gender perspectives in nineteenth century Ireland - public and private spheres* (Dublin, 1997), pp 36 - 49; John Logan, *Schooling and the promotion of literacy in nineteenth century Ireland* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University College Cork, 1992); John Logan, 'Book learning - the experience of reading in the national school 1831 - 1900' in Bernadette Cunningham and Máire Kennedy (eds), *The experience of reading - Irish historical perspectives* (Dublin, 1999), pp 173-96.

<sup>13</sup>Robin Wylie, *Ulster Model Schools - the architecture and fittings of model national schools built in Ulster in the nineteenth century* (Belfast, 1997).

<sup>14</sup>Ignatius Murphy, 'Primary Education' in Patrick J. Corish (ed.) *A history of Irish Catholicism*, v., pt. 6 (Dublin, 1971).

<sup>15</sup>Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish education experiment - the national system of education in the nineteenth century* (London, 1970).

the most important reference point for this present study. It has proved most useful in contextualising the effectiveness of the model schools as preparatory training institutes.<sup>16</sup> Her published account of the Kildare Place Society is equally illustrative.<sup>17</sup> The work of her protege, Harold Hislop, on the Kildare Place Society is particularly helpful in establishing the course of teacher training under the Lancastrian approach.<sup>18</sup> In the broader context of the history of Irish education, Hislop's research on, and analysis of developments in the period immediately preceding the establishment of the national system are crucial to a more reflective appreciation of the factors that shaped the course of events.<sup>19</sup> Kenneth Milne's examination of the Irish Charter schools - the one monograph that dealt with a country-wide network of institutions - is important in providing background information on efforts to regulate entry into teaching in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to the paucity of secondary sources, there is an almost superabundance of primary material, providing detailed accounts of the overall operation of the network and of the effectiveness of the individual model schools. Much of this has never been tapped. The reports of the Lords' Inquiry of 1854 and of the Royal Commission under the chairmanship of Lord Powis in 1870, along with the Board's annual reports to parliament constitute the bulk of primary published sources. The 1854 Inquiry came about as a result of the controversy that arose over the failure to use certain Board publications in Clonmel and Newry district model schools. These works, dealing with aspects of Christianity believed to be common to all denominations, were written by Archbishop Richard Whately, then a member of the Board. Consequently, a number of the Board's officers were closely questioned on the specific arrangements for the running of the early model schools. The Inquiry did not issue a report, but was instrumental in having the government direct the Board to undertake a complete revision of the rules and regulations for national schools.

The response of the Powis Commission was still less favourable. It was broadly unsympathetic to the national system, and, if anything, was hostile to model schools.

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<sup>16</sup>Susan M. Parkes, *Teacher training in Ireland 1811 - 1870* (unpublished M.Litt thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 1970). A Ph.D. thesis undertaken in the 1940s by T. Rafferty, *The training of national teachers in Ireland, 1831 - 1870*, does not appear to have been completed. See *Irish Historical Studies*, v, No. 17, (March, 1946) p. 88.

<sup>17</sup>Susan M. Parkes, *Kildare Place - the history of the Church of Ireland Training College 1811 - 1969* (Dublin, 1984).

<sup>18</sup>John Harold Hislop, *The Kildare Place Society 1811 - 1831: an Irish experiment in popular education* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 1990).

<sup>19</sup>Harold Hislop, 'The management of the Kildare Place school system 1811-1831', *Irish Educational Studies*, vol. 11 (Spring 1992), pp 52-71; idem., 'The 1806-12 Board of Education and non-denominational education in Ireland', *Oideas, Journal of the Department of Education* (Spring 1993), pp 48-60.

<sup>20</sup>Kenneth Milne, *The Irish Charter schools 1730 - 1830* (Dublin, 1997).

Each model school was visited by two assistant commissioners, the Rev. Benjamin Morgan Cowie and Scott Nasmyth Stokes, both members of Her Majesty's elementary school inspectorate. They were hand-picked for this purpose, and they themselves felt that 'our acquaintance with the training schools in England ... would ... be a qualification for forming a sound judgement on the value of the training schools in Ireland ...'.<sup>21</sup> Coming from a background of denominational state education, it was always likely that they would find it difficult to empathise with, or indeed understand, the thinking behind a non-denominational system. Their findings were almost universally unfavourable, and often bordered on the disparaging. Perplexingly, they made no effort to evaluate the training programme undertaken in the model schools. This appears to be in contradiction to their original objective. The opinions of many of the Board's officers - particularly its inspectors - on the efficacy of the arrangements for training were included in their evidence to the commission. It is important to note that three of the commissioners - Sir Robert Kane, Rev. David Wilson and James Gibson - dissented from the report and submitted letters in explanation of their stance. Of these, that by David Wilson is by far the most revealing. He challenged many of the findings of the majority report, questioned the accuracy of a number of the witnesses, and defended the Board's record on the training provided in the model schools and in the Central Training Establishment. For a balanced view of the debate, his submission must be read in conjunction with the main report.<sup>22</sup>

The *Annual Reports*, containing returns by the inspectors on the individual model schools, are very significant. Many, especially those on the early years of the first model schools, provide revealing insights into the particular arrangements for each school in respect of staff appointments, the selection of candidate teachers, the courses of study pursued, enrolment, and day-to-day management. Unfortunately, as the early euphoria dissipated and the inspectors found themselves coping with the burden of management and the threat posed by inimical interests, their submissions became more terse, formulaic and functional. It should also be noted that there was not a set pattern for these reports. Presentation varied from inspector to inspector with regard to detail and scope. The most revealing by far were those penned by Patrick Joseph Keenan, a head inspector, in the mid-1850s. Keenan, who later succeeded Alexander Macdonnell as resident commissioner, possessed the ability to transcend the mundane and to engage ably and insightfully with major issues.

The *Minutes of the Commissioners of National Education* exist in manuscript in the National Library of Ireland. These run from the inception of the national system in 1831

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<sup>21</sup>*Powis*, i, pt. 2, 725-97.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, i, 545-89.

through to the establishment of the Free State. Minutes for meetings held between February 1837 and July 1840 are no longer extant. R.B. McDowell's reconstruction of the Board provides a lucid account of how it functioned. For a voluntary board, meetings were held with astonishing regularity and generally comprised reports from three committees - the sub-committee, the finance committee and the agricultural committee. According to McDowell, the resident commissioner 'exercised considerable power through a transparent fiction ... the committees were the resident commissioner'.<sup>23</sup> Alexander Macdonnell, the longest serving holder of this office, as much as admitted this in his evidence to the Powis Inquiry.<sup>24</sup> As one might expect with formal minutes they generally recorded decisions made rather than the process by which they were arrived at. Because of a desire to reach consensus, procrastination was not unusual on sensitive matters. Only when there was a failure to reach ultimate unanimity were the names of dissentients revealed. The Board's 'Returns' to the Powis Inquiry include copies of the minutes relating to divisions 'on questions relating to rules or general policy of the National Board' and, importantly from the point of view of this study, all correspondence relating to the establishment of the different model schools.<sup>25</sup> The *Minutes* also contain considerable information on the later operation of the schools - appointments, proficiency, running costs and disciplinary action. These matters are covered in even greater detail in the school 'registers' held in the National Archives. These record Board decisions with respect to each school. But there are also unexplained gaps, while later records tend to be thin and uneven, or, as in the case of Carrickfergus Minor Model School, non-existent. There was a tendency in the inspectors' returns that were included in the *Annual Reports* laid before parliament to gloss over certain shortcomings that were potentially embarrassing. It is essential, therefore, that each of the primary sources with a bearing on the performance of each school are examined in order to construct an accurate school profile. The public attitude to the scheme of model schools and the operation of the national system in general can be traced by examining the collection of newspaper clippings assembled by the Board officials. These are also held in the National Archives. They run from 1854, but unfortunately the volumes from April 1861 to the end of 1872 have not survived. This break is but inadequately filled by newspaper clippings in the Larcom Papers. In contrast to the comprehensive nature of the Board collection these are narrowly focused and rarely descend to the local level. The Board's files cover all aspects of the national system, including teachers' grievances and their early efforts to organise. Given the nature of the medium from which the information is drawn, contentious matters tend to dominate.

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<sup>23</sup>R.B. McDowell, *The Irish administration 1801 - 1914* (London, 1964), p. 248.

<sup>24</sup>*Powis*, iv., 1047.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, vii, 18-32 and 97-166.

The study of the model schools falls naturally into three parts. The first, setting the context in which the national system evolved, concentrates on tracing the growing realisation, initially, of the need to regulate entry to teaching on the basis of moral uprightness, and, later on, an acceptance of the necessity for a rudimentary training in method. This involves a review of official initiatives, motivated by a concern over the abject failure of state sanctioned schools, to staunch the rapid increase in unregulated, unofficial private enterprises under masters of suspect credentials. The failure of the government response, that involved delegating this task to the voluntary Kildare Place Society, prepared the way for direct government intervention. But, while voluntaryists might have failed, their contribution to the success of the national system, particularly in the area of teacher training, was crucial. Part two of the study examines the early provision for teacher training under the national system and the realisation from the start of the need for preparatory training of candidate teachers. With incorporation this became possible, and the latter part of this section deals with the efforts of the National Board to realise its dream of a nation-wide network of model schools. The problems encountered - financial, religious and social - that frustrated the development and led to its uneven geographic distribution and ultimately resulted in its abandonment are explored. Part three, which adopts a thematic approach, and which examines the operation of the model schools, evaluates the preparatory training imparted in the model schools, under staff selection, the content and efficacy of the course of training, and the impact it had on the provision of trained teachers. 'We have no misgivings', reported the commissioners with respect to the model schools in 1849, 'as to their ultimately accomplishing the objects for which they were intended'.<sup>26</sup> With particular reference to their training function, the extent to which this hope was realised is at the heart of this study.

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<sup>26</sup>*Sixteenth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland, for the year 1849*, 2 vols [1231], H.C., 1850, xxv, i, 17 (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*).



## **PART ONE**

### **BACKGROUND:**

### **TEACHERS AND EDUCATION IN IRELAND**

## Teachers: The Need for Regulation and Training

Education in eighteenth-century Ireland, in so much as it was aimed at the masses, sought to mediate state values - political and religious - with the objective of securing the *status quo*. An acceptance of one's station in life superseded any state interest in the social advancement of the pupils or perfection of pedagogical method on the part of the teachers. Schools were an arm of the establishment. Their rejection by the majority of the people - Roman Catholic and dissenting Protestant - combined with an enthusiasm for the acquisition of functional literacy and numeracy, encouraged a proliferation of private, unregulated schools. This development, which threatened the authority of the Established Church and the state, presented government with a predicament that could be overcome only through the creation of a national system of elementary schools commanding majority support and staffed by trustworthy teachers. In tandem with this quest was a growing realisation that the teachers, to be effective both as mediators of established values and educators, would require at least a modicum of training. Thus, in the field of education, the last quarter of the eighteenth and the early years of the nineteenth centuries are associated with government efforts to forge an acceptable policy on popular elementary education, and its deepening understanding of the concomitant need to prepare the teacher for his role and to regulate entry to the position.

Developments in Ireland and elsewhere in Europe were shaped by politico-religious and socio-economic issues that came into play, with varying emphases and at different times, wherever attempts were made to provide education for the masses. This resulted in an uneven extension of schooling across the continent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: it was uneven socially in so far as access was determined by position; uneven with respect to religion in so far as Protestants enjoyed greater opportunities than Catholics; and uneven geographically in that educational provision was better in the north and west than in southern or eastern parts. It has been suggested that among the urban bourgeoisie basic literacy levels reached as high as ninety per cent at the close of the seventeenth century. The corresponding figure for urban artisans was a respectable sixty-five per cent, but little more than ten per cent of peasants had a rudimentary facility in reading and writing. Overall, significantly fewer adults in Catholic southern Europe - twenty to thirty per cent - were literate, compared with thirty-five to forty-five per cent in the Protestant north.<sup>1</sup> A distinguishing characteristic,

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<sup>1</sup> James Bowen. *A history of Western Education*, iii: *The Modern West - Europe and the New World* (London, 1981), p.121 The figures that he quotes are taken from C. Cipolla, *Literacy and development in the West* (1969). Based on ability to sign a marriage register their empirical reliability as to the actual level of literacy, rather than the relative, must be open to question.

common to both regions, was the absence of training for teachers in elementary schools. Only in the nineteenth century was it to become a feature of education. The general view was that limited literacy combined with moral orthodoxy were sufficient acquirements for the position of teacher in a common school. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that educators enjoyed a lowly status. Even in Prussia, where the initiative for a national system of elementary schooling dates from 1716, little effort was made to enhance the status of the schoolmaster. La Vopa suggests that his standing was low even among the labouring classes - in extreme cases at the level of field hands and beggars. In many instances, the position provided but a supplemental income. Its combination with the duties of sexton proved the most popular and workable. Given its low status, pedagogical skills were of secondary consideration. At the mercy of parents for his stipend, and lacking both academic qualifications and the status of a village 'notable', the teacher's existence was precarious.<sup>2</sup> Since this was the position in a country that officially encouraged universal elementary education, it is a matter of little surprise that progress towards the provision of teacher training, even in the most advanced parts of the Protestant north, was slow and fitful during the eighteenth century.

In England, where scholarships to grammar schools were available for children of promise from among the poor, elementary education for the masses depended on the charity school movement. Its limited aims - to teach the children to read the Bible and to confirm them in their opposition to popery - were matched only by the limited curriculum on offer and the low opinion of the teachers employed. In her valuable study of eighteenth century English charity schools, M.G. Jones observed that

the masters and mistresses were, as a body, ill-equipped for their work, ... they conducted themselves and their school satisfactorily only when they were subject to constant supervision and inspection. Among them were ignorant, lazy, dishonest and in-compassionate men and women.<sup>3</sup>

Social advancement through education was not envisaged. Many within the upper and middle classes still feared that literacy would encourage the broad masses to heighten their expectations and question the existing social order. A gradual realisation that a greater threat to stability was posed by the un-educated, coupled with the growing belief in the powerful capacity of education for rectitude helped to allay qualms. Burgeoning industrialisation made it imperative that workers be educated. The adoption of the monitorial systems as fashioned by Lancaster and Bell, in an age when utilitarian economic thinking held sway, made mass-education possible. An attachment to the principles of *laissez-faire* encouraged a disinclination on the part of the state to establish

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<sup>2</sup>La Vopa, *Prussian schoolteachers - profession and office, 1763-1848*, Chapter I, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in Asher Tropp, *The school teachers - the growth of the teaching profession in England and Wales from 1800 to the present day* (London, 1957), p. 6.

a state system of education. This reluctance, combined with the stubborn resistance of the Established Church, ensured that in England voluntarism continued to be the most notable feature in the management of its informal network of schools until well into the nineteenth century. The purpose of this quasi-national system was two-fold. It aimed to secure the attachment of the masses to their civil and religious leaders through an acceptance of their given station, and to improve their material situation. The 'educational' and 'moral' aspects of this role were seen as mutually complementary, though their capacity to be contradictory is obvious. In the maintenance of this dualistic balance the function of the teacher, as an agent of socialisation, was crucial. Here, too, the supporters of Lancaster and Bell believed their systems would not be found wanting. Bell, indicatively, defined the purpose of education as one of '[making] good scholars, good men and good Christians'.<sup>4</sup> The perceived need to adhere rigidly to the teaching 'method' in order to achieve these objectives demanded the establishment of a system of teacher training that would impart the necessary pedagogic skills to the teacher and develop in him an appreciation of his inherent moral obligations.<sup>5</sup>

### ***1.1 'Schools for the People'***

In Ireland, unlike England, there was a well-established tradition of government involvement in educational matters. Its overall thrust was plain. Education had a pivotal role to play as a bulwark against the advances of the Church of Rome. To fulfil this role education was to be imparted in officially sanctioned institutions only, principally parochial and diocesan schools. The ineffectiveness of the measures adopted, though not yet the inefficiencies of the institutions, was already apparent by 1731 when the *State of Popery Returns* were made. Though incomplete, in that they tend to understate the reality on the ground, they are the first indication that a ubiquitous, parallel, and popularly supported, unofficial system of schooling was in existence.

The *Returns* are disappointingly unforthcoming on the teachers in the parish schools. The diocese of Cloyne is an exception. Here, a brief but pithy comment suggests that, in common with the situation elsewhere in Europe, teaching was a position which held out little by way of inducement for a person of ability. Salaries varied from forty shillings to three pounds

[affording] the Masters a little aid, but is no way sufficient for their support ... and there being few other benefactions to these English Schools, the Protestant masters ... do make a hard shift to live.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Rev Dr. Andrew Bell, *An analysis of the experiment in education in the asylum at Egmore near Madras - comprising a system alike fitted to reduce the expense of tuition, abridge the labour of the master, and expedite the progress of the scholar* (Dublin 1808), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>R.W. Rich, *The training of teachers in England and Wales during the nineteenth century* (Bath, 1972 - first published by Cambridge University Press, 1933.), pp 1-21.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p.128.

A combination of official insipidity in promoting the parochial schools and a lack of on-going commitment to the suppression of their illegal counterparts ensured that the contribution of these state-sponsored institutions was negligible. Staffed by teachers neither well appreciated nor properly rewarded, it was never likely that they would succeed in raising literacy levels among the lower classes, nor win adherents to the state religion. The damning statistics from 1731 which, besides unofficial schools, indicated the existence of almost nine hundred Mass Houses and approximately seventeen hundred Roman Catholic clergy, highlighted all too vividly the failure of the Established Church's educational network. It demanded that other options be tried.

The response was to adapt the ideas of the English charity school movement to an Irish context.<sup>7</sup> As in England, the object was to reform the manners of the poor and encourage a passive acceptance by them of their inferior position in society. Hayton suggests that there were as many as 180 of these schools by the early 1720s.<sup>8</sup> The impetus was not maintained, though, and a need for re-invigoration was acknowledged. This time the emphasis was on proselytisation.<sup>9</sup> It found expression in the establishment, in 1733, of the 'Incorporated Society in Dublin for the Promoting of English Protestant Schools in Ireland'. By 1760 a total of forty-four residential 'Charter schools' were in operation throughout the four provinces. To these were added, later in the decade, four nurseries or feeder schools. Their purpose was clear - 'to strengthen His Majesty's government' by increasing the number of Protestants living in the kingdom - a need made all the more pressing by Protestant emigration to North America.

Habits of idleness and sloth - the cause of the social vices so prevalent among the poor - could be best tackled through the children of the Charter schools acquiring work skills 'that may promote the public good'.<sup>10</sup> Towards this end, small farms were commonly attached to the schools. In hindsight it was discovered that this was counterproductive. The master's financial interest in the commercial success of the farm encouraged his exploitation of the children, neglect of their material needs, and dereliction with regard to their literary education.

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<sup>7</sup>For comment on the influence of the English charity school movement and on the role of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in moulding attitudes to education for the poor see Kenneth Milne, *The Irish Charter schools 1730 - 1830* (Dublin, 1997), pp 17 - 23; David Hayton, 'Did Protestantism fail in early eighteenth century Ireland? Charity schools and the enterprise of religious and social reformation, c. 1690-1730' in A. Ford, J. McGuire and K. Milne (eds) *As by law established* (Dublin, 1995), pp 166-86.

<sup>8</sup>Hayton, 'Did Protestantism fail?' p. 169.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>10</sup>An abstract from the proceedings of the Incorporated Society ... 1737,' in Áine Hyland and Kenneth Milne (eds), *Irish educational documents* (Dublin, 1987), i, 52-4.

Masters and mistresses were expected to be 'known and approved Protestants ... of sober and virtuous lives'. A knowledge of husbandry and housewifery was also required. Appointment required the recommendation of the Society's governing committee of fifteen or of each school's local committee and the sanction of the ecclesiastical ordinary. The salary of the master or mistress ranged from five to twelve pounds per annum, to which was added a per capita clothing and diet allowance along with the farm income. A rent-free residence together with lighting and heating allowances were likewise provided.

Instruction in the English language and Protestant religion, which constituted the basic curriculum, occupied but two hours of the school day. The remainder was given over to farm and craft work with the immediate object of preparing the children for apprenticeships and going into service. According to Kenneth Milne, the calibre of the masters and mistresses appointed (commonly married couples) fell short of the Society's expectations.<sup>11</sup> His analysis indicates that they were from the same group as parish clerks who 'were notoriously ill-educated'. Ushers, where employed, were from a similar social and educational background as the masters and mistresses, and were often products of the Charter school system. Practically all schools and staff at some stage, and often repeatedly, attracted unfavourable attention from the Society, indicating both grave shortcomings in the character and commitment of the personnel, and ineffective and desultory local supervision.<sup>12</sup>

It is questionable if the Charter schools, which in 1791 catered for only 1,718 children,<sup>13</sup> could ever have gained the confidence of Roman Catholics, though it has been suggested that the 'goodwill of Catholic parents, who were well disposed at the outset' was lost due to the 'remorseless proselytising and mediocre standards of instruction'.<sup>14</sup> The surmise of John Leslie Foster, Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer, as to why a small number of Roman Catholic parents sent children to Charter schools, is reasonable. He speculated that parental attitude '[was] founded not in religious indifference, but in the view of obtaining, at all hazards, a good education for their

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<sup>11</sup>Kenneth Milne, 'Irish Charter schools', *The Irish Journal of Education*, viii, no. 1, (1974), pp 3-29; idem, 'The Irish Charter schools: the grand design in principle and practice', *Irish Educational Studies*, iv, no.1, (1984), pp 35-53; Milne, *Charter schools 1730 - 1830*, especially pp 96-116.

<sup>12</sup>Milne, *Charter schools 1730 - 1830*, p. 116.

<sup>13</sup>*Report of commissioners of Irish education inquiry, 1791* (henceforth *1791 Inquiry*) contained in the *Report of her Majesty's commissioners appointed to inquire into the endowments, funds and actual condition of all schools endowed for the purpose of education in Ireland*, H.C. 1857-8, App. XIX, p. 357. Also figures from James Kelly, 'The context and course of Thomas Orde's plan of education of 1787', *The Irish Journal of Education* xx, 1 (1986), p. 5.

<sup>14</sup>Kelly, 'Thomas Orde's plan of education', p. 5. See also M.G. Jones, *The Charity school movement: a study of eighteenth century Puritanism in action* (Cambridge, 1938), pp 242 - 43.

children, and trusting to the probability of their being re-converted in due time to the religion of their families'.<sup>15</sup>

### 1.2 'The People's Schools'

The avidity of the people for education could not be satisfied in the eighteenth century by a skeletal network of parish schools or by the distrusted and discredited Charter schools. In the absence of an acceptable alternative, a number of factors favoured the further extension of the independent schools. These included a growing awareness of the need for education among the masses, their rapidly rising number, and the marked increase in religious toleration. Moreover, official attempts to provide 'schools for the people', that were ideologically hostile, had met with palpable failure. Instead the underclass overwhelmingly looked to the unofficial, and indeed illegal, network of schools, some under clerical patronage, but many schools of private enterprise. This latter group, most commonly referred to as 'hedge schools' increased greatly in number from the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The relaxation of the Penal Laws greatly encouraged their proliferation. They can appositely be termed 'the people's schools'.

Figures from the early years of the nineteenth century for seventeen out of the twenty-two dioceses indicate that there were 3,736 independent schools and that they provided an education to 162,467 children, of whom 45,190 (28 per cent) were Protestants. Of the teachers, 2,465 (60 per cent) were Roman Catholic.<sup>16</sup> More comprehensive figures from the mid-1820s suggest that these were understatements. At that stage the number of schools was reckoned at 11,823, of which 9,352 (79 per cent) were classified as 'Pay' or 'Independent' schools.<sup>17</sup> It has been suggested that their 'independence' was in many cases qualified. Evidence for the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin indicate that patronage, both clerical and lay, was understated in the official returns.<sup>18</sup>

As to the teachers of these independent schools, contemporary empathetic accounts indicate that these schoolmasters were by no means an homogenous group. Many were learned. Ambitious curricula were attempted by some. The list of those providing testimonials for, or subscribing to Paul Deighan's *Complete Treatise on Arithmetic* ... is revealing in this respect. It includes many who appended to their names the titles of

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<sup>15</sup> *Inquiry of 1806-12, Fourteenth report from the commissioners of the board of education in Ireland*, H.C. 1812-13, p. 335 (henceforth *Inquiry of 1806-12, Fourteenth report*).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 330.

<sup>17</sup> *Second report of the commissioners of Irish education inquiry*, H.C. 1826-7 (12), xii. App No.2. pp 46-7 (henceforth *Inquiry of 1826-7, Second report* ... 1826).

<sup>18</sup> Mary Daly, 'The development of the national school system, 1831-40' in Art Cosgrove and D. McCartney (eds), *Studies in Irish history - presented to R. Dudley Edwards* (Dublin, 1979), p. 152. Also, John Logan, *Schooling and the promotion of literacy in nineteenth century Ireland*, (unpublished PhD. thesis, U.C.C., 1992), p. 38.

'professor', 'mathematician', 'philomath' or 'principal' of an 'academy'.<sup>19</sup> The teaching of Classics was not unknown, particularly in Munster.<sup>20</sup> An uncritical acceptance of some coeval accounts would suggest that it was prevalent. The empirical evidence falls short of supporting this perception. Nonetheless, evidence indicates that the teaching of the Classics was attempted in certain unofficial schools, particularly those attended by students preparing for the priesthood. It should also be appreciated that Classical studies were not the preserve of Roman Catholics. Indeed the first teacher of Classics referred to by Carleton - 'matchless for the most savage brutality' - was a Presbyterian clergyman.<sup>21</sup> More convincingly, Robert Ward's survey of school advertisements in the eighteenth-century press, principally in Ulster, reveals a proliferation of writing and classical academies.<sup>22</sup> But even in eighteenth-century Ulster the absence of classical works from the lists of books sold by chapmen in the second half of that century, as noted by Adams, provides evidence that a change was underway.<sup>23</sup> Stanford's research suggests that a marked decline in Classical studies was not confined to the northern province. While he would appear to accept uncritically Dowling's and O'Connell's claims regarding the prevalence of Classics in hedge schools in the eighteenth century, he counsels caution in drawing conclusions about the early nineteenth century situation, suggesting that the few travellers who believed they may have come across pockets of Latin speaking scholars in the wilds of west Munster may have been duped.<sup>24</sup> It is hardly coincidental that this decline was contemporaneous with the rise of diocesan seminaries.

The social status of those teachers believed to be both competent and humane was high within their own communities. Subject to the forces of a free market, a healthy rivalry existed among the more learned. Among the less well endowed this tended to descend to displays of pedantry shrouded in arcana. They have continued to attract the attention of commentators since.<sup>25</sup> Earlier works were inclined to treat the subject of popular education in hedge schools as essentially a Roman Catholic response to the unsuitability

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<sup>19</sup>Paul Deighan, 'Philomath', *A complete treatise on arithmetic, rational and practical ... perfectly suited to the man of business, academies, schools and students of every denomination desirous of becoming proficient in accounts* (2 vols, Dublin, 1804), i, xi - xxv.

<sup>20</sup>Thomas Crofton Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland* (London, 1824); William Shaw Mason, *A statistical account or parochial survey of Ireland, drawn up from the communications of the clergy ... 1814-1819* (3 vols, Dublin, 1814-19); George Holmes, *Sketches of some of the southern Counties of Ireland collected during a tour in the autumn of 1797* (Whitegate, Co. Clare, 1987); Sir John Carr, *The stranger in Ireland - a tour in the southern and western parts of that country in the year 1805* (London, 1806); Mr. & Mrs. S.C. Hall, *Ireland, its scenery and character...* (London, 1841).

<sup>21</sup>William Carleton, *The autobiography of William Carleton* (London, 1968), p. 60.

<sup>22</sup>Robert Ward, *Encyclopedia of Irish schools* (New York, 1995), pp 136 - 40.

<sup>23</sup>J.R.R. Adams, *The printed word and the common man - popular culture in Ulster 1700 - 1900* (Belfast, 1987), p.19.

<sup>24</sup>W.B. Stanford, 'Towards a history of classical influences in Ireland', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 70 C (1970), pp 75-6; idem, *Ireland and classical tradition* (Dublin, 1984.), p. 25.

<sup>25</sup>The most recent work which examines all these areas is Antonia MacManus' *The Irish hedge school and its books: 1695 - 1831* (Dublin, 2002).



of the official network, while overlooking the support among Dissenters for such pay schools.<sup>26</sup> Later more objective and reflective accounts call into question the generalisations of the earlier commentators. They suggest an immense diversity under all headings, and, overall, tend to the view that their educative role was more substantial than was officially acknowledged at the time.<sup>27</sup>

In the light of later problems that arose over government attempts to impose a 'united' or non-denominational educational system, it is of interest that mixed denominational attendance was not a cause for concern among those sending their children to hedge schools. Teachers had an acute vested interest in not giving offence to pupils of any denomination. This internal control appears to have functioned satisfactorily. John Leslie Foster stated that in areas where Roman Catholics were in a clear majority there was little evidence of intermingling. However, in Ulster, especially where the denominations were fairly balanced, the schools appeared to be attended indiscriminately by both Catholics and Protestants. Irrespective of the religion of the teacher, the children were instructed in the catechism of their own faith.<sup>28</sup> This willingness to mix was also noted by James Glassford on his travels in Ireland in the mid-1820s during his time as commissioner on the 1824-6 Inquiry.<sup>29</sup> With what transpired to be an uncanny degree of prescience, Glassford formed the opinion that it was the inherent irregularity of the situation that proved its greatest strength and that any expectation entertained of superimposing a common system of education was 'little better than a dream'. He believed the stumbling block would be a reluctance to be seen to accept publicly a compromise on principles.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Patrick J. Dowling, *The hedge schools of Ireland* (Dublin & Cork, [1935?]); idem., *A history of Irish education - a study in conflicting loyalties* (Cork, 1971).

Philip O'Connell, *Schools and scholars of Breifne* (Dublin, 1942).

Timothy Corcoran, *State policy in Irish education A.D. 1536-1816* (Dublin, 1916); idem., *Selected texts on education systems in Ireland from the close of the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 1928); idem., *Some lists of Catholic lay teachers and their illegal schools in the later Penal times* (Dublin, 1932).

<sup>27</sup>J.R.R. Adams, 'The hedge schools and popular education in Ireland' in James Donnelly and Kerby Miller (eds), *Irish popular culture 1650-1850* (Dublin, 1999), pp 97-117; Mary Castelyn, *A history of literacy and libraries in Ireland* (Aldershot and Vermont, 1984); L.M. Cullen, 'Patrons, teachers and literacy in Irish 1700-1850.' in Daly and Dickson (eds), *The origins of popular literacy - language, change and educational development 1700-1920* (Dublin, 1990), pp 15-44; Bernadette Cunningham and Maire Kennedy (eds), *The experience of reading* (Dublin, 1999); James Hoban, 'The survival of the hedge schools - a local study', *Irish Educational Studies*, iii, no. 2 (1983), pp 21-36; John Logan, 'Governesses, tutors and parents: domestic education in Ireland 1700-1880', *Irish Educational Studies*, vii, no. 2 (1988), pp 1-19; idem, *Schooling and the promotion of literacy in nineteenth century Ireland*, (unpublished PhD thesis, N.U.I. Cork, 1992); M.A. Lyons, *The interface between hedge school education and systematised schooling*, (unpublished M.A. thesis, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1988); McIvor, *Popular education in the Irish Presbyterian Church*; McManus, *The Irish hedge school*; Stanford, 'Towards a history of classical influences in Ireland'; idem, *Ireland and classical tradition*.

<sup>28</sup>*Inquiry of 1806-12, Fourteenth report*, App No.3, p. 343.

<sup>29</sup>James Glassford, *Notes on three tours in Ireland in 1824 and 1826* (Bristol, 1832), pp 19, 45-6.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, pp 74-5.

Hedge schools were a popular response to the officially-sanctioned schemes. The latter, by their constitution, could never have met the expectations of the majority, were inefficient with respect to management, and were lacking in pedagogic expertise. Their purpose was to protect and extend the hegemony of an elite with regard to both its political and religious interests. A definitive study of the contribution of hedge schools to popular education is hampered not only by a lack of balanced contemporary comment but also, with the exception of William Carleton,<sup>31</sup> by an absence of any detailed, extensive memoir by either teacher or pupil.<sup>32</sup> The account of his early education by P. W. Joyce, scholar and headmaster of the Central Model School in Dublin gives some indication of the gradations to be found among both the teachers and their schools, and the expectations of the students. Born in 1827, his limited experience of them comes from the period of their imminent demise. Written in his declining years, it is difficult to allay the suspicion that much of it is a pastiche of accounts from an earlier time. He distinguished between the ubiquitous elementary school and those of a higher class which he compared to the Intermediate schools of a later period. This latter group, which assumed a basic literary education among new entrants, were urban institutions, and tended to specialise in either science or the Classics. It was not unknown, however, for schools to offer both courses. Some of the students were prepared for the professions, including the priesthood. Others were 'poor scholars' from distant parts. The majority, he assured the reader, attended with 'no particular end in view ... but for the pure love of learning' The elementary or 'hedge teachers' he regarded as

a respectable body of men ... well liked by the people. Many of them were rough and uncultivated in speech, but all had sufficient scholarship for their purpose, and many indeed very much more...<sup>33</sup>

The level of 'scholarship' required for the majority of such schools was unlikely to have been high. The curriculum was tailored to the expectations of the people. The following alluring, if somewhat sardonic account of a hedge school on Cape Clear, Ireland's most southerly island, suggests an institution where no more than the bare rudiments were attempted, notwithstanding the claims of the master to the contrary:

Further on as we ascended the hill, we came into a snug hollow, in which was a low hut without a chimney, covered with a net work of ropes, to save the thatch from the stripping of the storm; and there came forth from this hive or hovel, a hum as if from a wasp's nest. This may be the Cape Clear School, said my friend, let us go and see the seminary; so bending double to pass as through the aperture of a cavern's mouth, we descended into a hole, as dark, smokey and smelly, as the cave of Cacus; but in a short

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<sup>31</sup> Carleton, *The autobiography*; idem, *Traits and stories of the Irish peasantry* (2 vols, New York, 1862) - in particular 'The poor scholar' and 'The hedge school'.

<sup>32</sup> Logan, *Schooling and the promotion of literacy*, p.98 would suggest that this obstacle is not insurmountable.

<sup>33</sup> P.W. Joyce, *English as we speak it in Ireland* (Dublin, 1979 - first published 1910), pp 149-63. For comment on Joyce as an educationalist see John Coolahan, 'The contribution of P.W. Joyce to the Irish education system', *Oideas*, vol. 34 (Summer 1989), pp 75-93.

time, our eyes assimilating themselves to the palpable obscure, could observe about twenty children sitting on stones, humming forth their lessons like hornets preparing to swarm; every little healthy, ragged, fish-smelling urchin, had a bit of a book in his hand - one had a leaf of Reading made Easy, another a scrap of the Church of England Catechism, another a torn copy of the Heart of Jesus, and a big girl was poring over a large octavo volume, covered carefully with a case of green stuff; the name of this useful book was the Gentleman Instructed. The furniture was of a heterogeneous character, bespeaking the multifarious occupations of the pedagogue. In a corner by the fire-side was his bed, over which were hanging sundry kinds of fish put to smoke or dry, over the door were nets and rods, along the walls were hanging a number of dead rabbits, and over the game was suspended a bag full of foetid ferrets, all which bespoke, that independent of his college, this worthy Principal, drew much of his livelihood from the sea in summer, and from the sandhills in winter. Then the quaint look of the Ludimagister himself; his wig that seemed to be made of the dag wool of the hairy sheep of the island, grown small by scratching, hung on the left side of his head, being pushed away by the pen which was fixed in his right ear. With a magisterial scrape of the foot, and an *important* bow, he bade us welcome. Sir, says the Vicar, I am glad to see a school established on the island. I hope you are doing well. Oh yes, Sir, very well indeed, his Reverence the Priest approves of my method. I came in order to please his Reverence, my 'Magnus Apollo', and teach the natives not only the rudiments of reading and writing, but also arithmetic scientific and commercial, gauging, surveying, and navigation, the use of the globes, geography, and the mathematics, and I have left my late establishment in Courtmacsherry, and the Lord will, I trust, prosper me in the desire to communicate the liberal arts to the poor islanders. Having delighted some of the little scholars by asking them to spell a few words, and giving them half-pence, we evacuated the academy, and my friend said on leaving it, I am glad the new Priest is sufficiently liberal to allow a school to be established here. The owner of the island some time ago built a school-house, and offered to pay a master, but the Priest, his miraculous Reverence, said he would allow no School, they were well enough with learning; the fish were caught and the potatoes grew without it, and men could do all that man wanted, eat drink, and sleep. It was a happy little place, and he would not alter things, or turn what was well enough inside out - such were his authoritative reasons. He argued 'if ignorance be bliss, 'tis folly to be wise'.<sup>34</sup>

From the other end of the country we are provided with a description of a hedge school somewhat less wretched than that on Cape Clear, but far superior to it in terms of purpose. Under the control of a man of undoubted ability and unquestionable probity, the emphasis was more on academic advancement than functional accomplishment. Its most illustrious *alumnus* was Dr. Henry Cooke who led the Presbyterian Church in its dispute with the National Board of Education in the 1830s.<sup>35</sup> The description of the school near Maghera, about 1790, is provided by his biographer, Dr. Porter.

The first school he attended was at Ballymacilcurr, a mile from his father's house. It was a fair sample of the country and the period. The house was a thatched cabin. The seats were black oak sticks from the neighbouring bog. A fire of peat blazed or rather smoked in the middle of the floor, and a hole in the roof overhead served as a chimney. The teacher was a Mr. Joseph Pollock ... a tall, lanky Scotchman - distinguished by an enormous nose, a tow wig, a long coat of rusty black, leather tights, grey stockings, brogues and a formidable hazel rod ... But notwithstanding his uncouth exterior [he] was an excellent teacher, as teachers were in those days. He was a Presbyterian of the

<sup>34</sup> Caesar Otway, *Sketches in Ireland - descriptive of interesting and hitherto unnoticed districts in the North and South* (Dublin, 1827), p. 236.

<sup>35</sup> See T. Ó Raifeartaigh, 'Mixed education and the Synod of Ulster, 1831-40', *Irish Historical Studies*, ix, No. 35, (Mar. 1955), pp 281-99.

strictest sect, and religious training was, in his honest mind, an essential part of a boy's education...<sup>36</sup>

On this last point the Belfast teacher and educational innovator, David Manson, also a Presbyterian, would have absolutely concurred, viewing academic acquirements as subordinate to moral development.

... as virtue is preferable to learning, due regard will be paid to their morals. Good nature and integrity will be encouraged, and the contrary vices exposed wherever these symptoms appear.<sup>37</sup>

John Rule sounds a note of warning to historians who might consider studying the contribution of the English counterpart - the 'adventure school'. He writes:

Professor Harrison has recently remarked that there is no clearer example of the way in which historians have overlooked the perceptions of the common people than their treatment of the working class private venture school in the nineteenth century. The denigration of them by the Victorian 'professionalisers' has been simply accepted ... although up to 1870 they existed in large numbers because they provided what a large section of the working class wanted and were integrated into their culture.

Harrison's own description of them as 'the people's own schools' rather than 'schools for the people' is equally applicable to Ireland.<sup>38</sup> The motivation stemmed from a desire 'to learn English, read Bank notes and keep money accounts' and not 'to a public concern for the moral and political well-being of society...'<sup>39</sup> Whether free of varying forms of local control or not, their very irregular existence and increasing popularity were no small stimuli in concentrating the efforts of successive administrations to fashion a national system capable of supplanting them. Government and middle class fears were fuelled by the belief that a failure to engraft on to the basic education demanded by the lower classes a moral message that aimed at reconciling the masses to their immediate situation and perpetuated the existing social and political values would result in the overthrow of the established social order. This fear was repeatedly stressed by those commentators wishing to provoke and to influence government efforts at regulation.

### ***1.3 'Informed' Comment***

Informed official thinking in the late eighteenth century was in general censorious with respect to the character of the teacher. He was seen as ill-educated, if not in fact

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<sup>36</sup>Quoted by McIvor, *Popular education in the Irish Presbyterian Church*, p. 48.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp 41-3. For further comment on Manson see Adams, *The printed word*, pp 17-8; Ward, *Encyclopedia of Irish schools*, pp 134-5; W.A.C Stewart and W.P. McCann, *The educational innovators 1750-1880* (New York, 1969), p.14.

<sup>38</sup>John Rule, *The labouring classes in early industrial England 1750-1850* (London and New York, 1991), p. 246.

<sup>39</sup>Shaw Mason, *Parochial survey of Ireland*, iii, 627. Co. Kilkenny. Similar comment by J.E. Gordon is quoted in Dowling, *The hedge schools of Ireland*, p. 43.

ignorant, and unable as a result to deliver but the most rudimentary curriculum. He was believed to be morally irresolute, both with regard to his own personal life and, through the lack of control exercised within his own school, in respect of the use of 'pernicious' books as teaching aids. He was credited with being, if not a participant, at least a prime motivator behind local subversive activity. To him was attributed the authorship of seditious ballads and threatening notices. In short he was officially viewed as the very antithesis of what society required. R.S. Tighe, in a pamphlet addressed to Thomas Orde, the chief secretary (1784-87), succinctly expressed the concerns of many of the privileged class:

[A]lmost all the evils of this country proceed from the vile education of the people, who are brought up in laziness, dirt, equivocating, lying, pilfering, and artful talk ... One of the worst yet most striking features of this country is a neglect, and, I might say, a contempt of laws ... They set up their own judgements against the government and against the legislature, and unfortunately have done so too often with effect and with impunity by assistance from slanderous and seditious prints, the scum of literature.

Tighe also believed a striking contrast existed between the people of Ulster and the three other provinces with respect to industry, morality and docility. The satisfactory position pertaining in the northern province he attributed to their attention 'to the duties of religion', and their possession 'of as much learning as is necessary for their stations'.<sup>40</sup> Coming at a time when areas of the South were convulsed by Rightboy agrarian disturbances, this unfavourable comparison is perhaps understandable.

The assessment of Tighe was flawed. Material improvements alone would not suffice. Education, even of a limited nature, made its recipients more keenly aware of social inequalities. As the 1790s would show, the drive for constitutional and representative reform would be orchestrated by those same Northerners '[bearing] evident marks of improvement in civilisation'. Un-regulated education facilitated the invasion of ideas hostile to the very existence of the state. The 'Secret Committee' of 1793 reported the publishing in Dublin of 'several seditious and inflammatory papers', which were dispersed throughout the country 'and seem to have countenanced and encouraged the Defenders in their proceedings...'. In reviewing the course of events leading up to the 1798 Rebellion it was the official view that the instigators spent their first three years 'preparing the public mind for their future purposes by the circulation of the most seditious publications, particularly the works of Thomas Paine'.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps as many as 40,000 copies of Paine's *Rights of Man* were sold in Ireland before 1798, where it was particularly popular among the Roman Catholic peasantry. Arguably its sales in Ireland

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<sup>40</sup>Melantius (R.S. Tighe), *A letter to Mr. Orde upon the education of the people* (Dublin, 1788), pp 6-7.

<sup>41</sup>*Report from the Committee of Secrecy - Reported by the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Castlereagh*, 21 August 1798, p. 2.

were proportionately greater than in Britain.<sup>42</sup> Certain newspapers - *The Union Star*, *The Northern Star*, and *The Press* - were accused of extreme reprobation. Of the last named - and believed to be the most widely circulated - it was claimed that

Every species of misrepresentation and sophistry was made use of to vilify the government, to extend the union, to shake the connection with Great Britain, to induce the people to look to French assistance, to exaggerate the force and numbers of the disaffected, and systematically to degrade the administration of justice in all its departments.<sup>43</sup>

Second only to 'the artful emissaries dispersed through the land' the teacher was identified as an agent in the spread of subversion and disaffection. Described as

... some petty demagogue, whose pride in his superior literature was the cause of his disaffection, which must sink as letters grow more common, became the officious minister of treason, [who] vented his lies and calumnies where he might do it without danger and contradiction, to an illiterate circle, who looked up with wonder and implicit belief to the man who could read, and through this polluted channel derived all their information and principles.<sup>44</sup>

Even prior to the Rebellion, concern was voiced by some enlightened Protestants about the conditions experienced by Roman Catholics under a constitution which offered them 'nothing of liberty, but its turbulence, its ferocity, and its viciousness'. Central to the problem was the prohibition on Roman Catholic teachers who might teach the children 'the simple principles of morality ... inculcate obedience to the laws, and impress them with sentiments of attachment to their rulers'. This denial resulted either in the children being reared in ignorance or receiving, by stealth, 'that kind of instruction which only inspired them with contempt for the laws, and hatred towards the government'. The writer, Robert Bell, was convinced that the pre-1782 legislature failed miserably to empathise with the people. 'There existed no community of interests, no reciprocity of benefits, no kind of confidence, nor good will.' In fine, Bell charged the government with acting in direct contravention to that which wise rule demanded. Instead of attempting to foster an interest in 'the defence and preservation of the state' among the people, in Ireland, a contrary principle always prevailed - 'The poorer, and more ignorant the peasants ... the less danger was to be apprehended from their turbulent and rebellious disposition.' To this 'false and narrow-minded policy' he attributed the 'parlous' state of the country.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>John Keane, *Tom Paine - a political life* (London, 1995), pp 324-333. Of particular interest on Paine's appeal to the peasantry is David Dickson's 'Paine and Ireland' in D. Dickson, D. Keogh and K. Whelan (eds), *The United Irishmen - republicanism, radicalism and rebellion* (Dublin, 1993), pp 135-150. See also Kevin Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty - radicalism, Catholicism and the construction of Irish identity 1760-1830* (Cork, 1996), pp 59-98.

<sup>43</sup>*Report from the Committee of Secrecy*, p.10.

<sup>44</sup>Rev. James Dunn, *Essay on the present state of manner and education among the lower class of people* (3rd ed., Dublin, 1805), quoting from Report of Committee of Secrecy, p. 5.

<sup>45</sup>Robert Bell, *A description of the condition and manners as well as the moral and political character*,

In a detailed comment on the state of education, Bell wondered whether that commonly available to the poor was worse than none at all in that it served 'to narrow their minds; and instead of inspiring them with notions of morality, it paved the way for the commission of every species of vice'. In this the role of the teacher was pivotal. Of the very lowest class, possessing little other than basic knowledge, and devoid of moral truths, even the reading material he used was fraught with danger to the common good. The contents of the books used, at their least harmful, gave the poor romantic notions 'incompatible with their station in life'. At their most extreme, they 'gave scope and activity to the worst passions'. Of the books used, those that recounted 'the histories of some of the very worst characters from among themselves' were the most dangerous.

In the perusal of these, youth became familiarised to offences of the most violent and atrocious nature; and they were taught to look upon robbers, incendiaries, murderers, and violators of women, as objects of admiration.

His readers were assured that 'the transition from theory to practice was but short'.<sup>46</sup> Bell's vivid account was not intended as a condemnation of the Irish peasantry. His aim, rather, was to inform a British readership that the desperate plight of the peasantry was due solely to the counterproductive effect of gratuitous state coercion. His intrinsic sense of fairness is evinced by his unrestrained praise for the manner in which the Classics were taught in some of the people's schools.<sup>47</sup>

Anthony King warmly urged on government the advantages of including in any national scheme of education 'the early habits of religion and industry'. The first would rescue the child from contamination 'by an inveterate course of depraved passions and vicious propensities'. The second - a belief which he claimed had been long acknowledged - was in the state's own commercial interest. The relationship between the master's abilities and his morals he regarded as inseparable.<sup>48</sup> This point, in various ways, was emphasised by later commentators. Sir John Carr worried about the quality of education that could be imparted to the children of the poor by the hedge school master - 'a miserable, breadless being, who is nearly as ignorant as themselves'. Rhetorically, he wondered

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*education, etc of the peasantry of Ireland such as they were between the years 1780 and 1790 when Ireland was supposed to have arrived at its highest degree of prosperity and happiness* (London, 1804), pp 24-6. This point was later reiterated by John Bernard Trotter in *Walks through Ireland in the years 1812, 1814 & 1817* (London, 1819), pp 63-6.

<sup>46</sup>Bell, *Condition and manners*, pp 39-40.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, pp 41-2.

<sup>48</sup>Anthony King, *Thoughts on the expediency of adopting a system of national education more immediately suited to the policy of this country with certain brief remarks on that class of free schools commonly distinguished by the name of diocesan schools* (Dublin, 1793), pp 1, 5, 11.

what proportion of morals and learning can flow from such a source into the mind of the ragged young pupil, can easily be imagined, but cannot be reflected upon without serious concern.<sup>49</sup>

Commentators were in agreement that the inculcation of moral values through a well-regulated system of education would result in increased social harmony and stability. In this respect the comparative tranquility of Scotland was adverted to by a number of observers. They attributed this to the influence of the well-developed network of parish schools administered by teachers of high moral character. The Scot Daniel Dewar observed, not without a touch of chauvinism, that the existence of such a system in Scotland

had produced in the mass of the people, industry, virtue and happiness, and [had] conferred on them that proud pre-eminence of intellectual endowment by which they are distinguished above all the nations of the globe... [The] system of education which I recommend, embraces the pure morality which christianity inculcates; which while it teaches the children of the poor to read, at the same time unfolds those principle of truth, and justice, and piety, by which their early habits are formed, and their future life is to be guided.

Addressing the concern that limited education would have a deeply unsettling effect on the masses, Dewar believed that, when well directed, it posed no threat, on the contrary, it was the uneducated who were more open to being misled. Reassuringly, he declared education to be 'necessarily subservient to the advancement of order, virtue, and happiness'.<sup>50</sup>

Edward Wakefield echoed this unfavourable comparison between Scotland and Ireland. The responsibility for this contrasting situation he attributed to a fundamental difference between the teachers of both kingdoms. Those in Scotland had been described in an Act of 1803 as 'a most useful body of men, and essential to the public welfare'. By contrast, the common schoolmaster in Ireland he believed to have been generally a candidate for the priesthood who had been found wanting on moral grounds.

To persons of this kind is the education of the poor entirely intrusted; and the consequence is, that their pupils imbibe from them enmity to England, hatred to the government and superstitious veneration for old and absurd customs.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Sir John Carr, *The stranger in Ireland ...* p. 250. See also Dunn, *Present state of manner and education*, p. 19.

<sup>50</sup>Daniel Dewar, *Observations on the character, customs and superstitions of the Irish, and on some of the causes which have retarded the moral and political improvement of Ireland* (London, 1812), pp 67-73. See also the comments of Henry Monck Mason, a founding member of the Kildare Place Society, *Address to the nobility and gentry upon the necessity of using every exertion at the present to promote the education of the poor of Ireland* (Dublin, 1815), pp 10-11, 20.

<sup>51</sup>Edward Wakefield, *An account of Ireland statistical and political* (2 vols, London, 1812), ii, 396-8.



Citing Dutton's *Statistical Survey* ... for Co. Clare, he touched on a fundamental problem that had to be addressed if 'respectable' candidates were to be attracted to the position. Inadequate and uncertain remuneration obliged many country schoolmasters to seek employment in manual labour for mere subsistence.<sup>52</sup> A belief that teachers, no more than the general population, should not be given ideas above their station, ensured that this particular obstacle proved enduring.

The intervention of John O'Driscoll in the debate offered a different perspective. Described by Bowen as a 'liberal', and an 'astute ... critic of the Established Church', he was unusual in that he was a Roman Catholic.<sup>53</sup> Of his class he was on the 'enlightened' wing. Poverty, rather than an ability to read, was at the root of discontent. He believed firmly in the regenerative power of education when it was imparted in conjunction with religious instruction. In the absence of such an approach there was the danger that education would 'furnish a new and powerful weapon to the enemies of social order'. The 'powerful engine of religion' he believed would have to be brought to bear. Making the argument, which would later be turned against his class, that religion uniquely offered 'a motive of endurance and forbearance', O'Driscoll attributed to it alone the power to 'soothe, restrain, console and establish ... the relations of sovereign and subject, and of man with man.'<sup>54</sup> Under the present non-regulated system no good would be effected. On the contrary, the very character of the teachers ensured that it could not.

The country schoolmaster is independent of all system and control; he is himself one of the people, imbued with the same prejudices, influenced by the same feelings, subject to the same habits; to his little store of learning, he generally adds some traditional tales of his country of a character to keep alive discontent. He is the scribe, as well as the chronicler and the pedagogue of his little circle; he writes their letters, and derives from this no small degree of influence and profit, but he has open to him another deep interest and greater emoluments which he seldom has virtue enough to leave unexplored. He is the centre of the mystery of rustic iniquity, the cheap attorney of the neighbourhood, and furnished with his little book of precedents, the fabricator of false leases and surreptitious deeds and conveyances. Possessed of important secrets and of useful acquirements, he is courted and caressed; a cordial reception and the usual allowance of whiskey greets his approach, and he completes his character by adding inebriety to his other accomplishments. Such is frequently the rural schoolmaster, a personage whom poetry would adorn with primeval innocence and all the flowers of her garland.<sup>55</sup>

In short, contemporary views accepted the need to address the question of popular education through the formulation and implementation of a regulated system of schooling that would have as its core value the inculcation of attitudes of acceptance and subservience among the masses. The futility of such an exercise in the absence of the

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 399.

<sup>53</sup> Desmond Bowen, *The Protestant Crusade in Ireland 1800 - 70: a study of Protestant-Catholic relations between the Act of Union and Disestablishment* (Dublin, 1978), pp 57, 85.

<sup>54</sup> John O'Driscoll, *Thoughts and suggestions on the education of the peasantry of Ireland* (2nd ed., London and Cork, 1820), pp 13-16.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 11. Corcoran's reproduction of this passage in *Selected texts*, pp 107-8 is not accurate.

replacement of the morally degenerate schoolmaster with one who would instil virtue and an unquestioning respect for the existing order was wisely canvassed. This moral prerequisite outranked any nascent concern with the need to train the mediator in the dispatch of his literary functions.

#### ***1.4 The State Response***

The period 1787 to 1830 is generally seen as one of successive official initiatives to put in place a system of primary education acceptable to the principal denominations that would satisfy the demand, on the one hand, from the masses for a functional system of secular education, and, on the other, from the ruling elite for a moral under-pinning of the *status quo*. It culminated in the formulation of a national system in 1831 that envisaged a multi-denominational scheme of education, incorporating separate distinct religious instruction, and combined secular and moral education under local patronage.<sup>56</sup> Contemporaneous with this evolution a gradual but equally significant development took place pertaining to the requirements necessary for the job of teacher. By the end of the period, not only was it accepted that teachers should be trained, but an incipient system of teacher training was in place, on which the National Board of Education would base its own early training programme.

The first government attempt to develop a national education system was that unveiled by Thomas Orde in 1787. Of far greater significance than its novelty on the chronological scale was its radical content. Orde proposed a comprehensive scheme to provide education for those from the lowest to the highest ranks of society. This onerous undertaking could not be accomplished at once. The general outline that he proposed would, rather, allow the system to be established by degrees. The various grades of institutions he believed should be capable of '[qualifying] the youth of each order for excellence in the stations and pursuits belonging to each'. At its primary level, schools based on the parish system, though staffed by Protestant teachers, were intended to serve the needs of all denominations. This was the first official attempt to remove from state sanctioned schools an overt proselytising role. Exceptional also for its time was his advocacy of education as a means of social mobility, and particularly as a source of better teachers. In this, his speech in the House of Commons was explicit:

It may do more. It may give to the youth of every class an opportunity of bringing out and improving talents, with which nature may have endowed them, fitted to a rank superior to that which fortune had allotted to them. The preservation no less than the immediate increase of learning may thus be ensured by the formation of more able instructors to future generations.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Hislop argues that the experience of the Kildare Place Society demonstrated that the prospect of establishing a 'united' system of education under local management was neither realistic nor realisable (Hislop, 'The 1806-12 Board of Education ...', p. 57).

<sup>57</sup>John Giffard, *Mr. Orde's Plan of an improved system of education in Ireland submitted to the House of*

Fully cognisant of the inadequacy of the customary remuneration to induce 'a man of sufficient qualification' to seek employment as a teacher, Orde proposed that government fund the education of a certain number of needy children in each parish to boost income, and that a comfortable residence be provided as part of the total emolument. He also toyed with the idea of making a small *per capita* payment for each child in attendance, as a further inducement. The moral qualities sought in the teacher and the bilateral nature of his duties to the child - intellectual and moral - are clearly set out.

He should be chosen with serious care in respect of morals and propriety of conduct, and should not only be competent to impart the ordinary subjects of instruction, such as reading, writing and common arithmetic, but to inculcate also by plain and simple method the first principles of honesty, truth and industry.<sup>58</sup>

Orde re-emphasised this charge later in his speech. The masters were encouraged to provide more than superficial instruction. It was their unrelenting task to engage the understanding of the children if they were to succeed in impressing 'upon their minds those simple precepts of moral and civil duty'.<sup>59</sup>

His plan also envisaged a greater degree of government intervention than had been heretofore considered. Initially it had relied on legal prescription. Later, the establishment of the Incorporated Society in 1733 had committed the government to annual funding. Orde was firmly of the opinion that if his proposals were to succeed another step would have to be taken. There would have to be effective supervision. It was clear to him from information provided by Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick, Inspector of Prisons, who reported on the Charter schools during the latter half of the 1780s, that the supervisory arrangements of the Incorporated Society were anything but efficacious. In particular, Fitzpatrick commented on 'the shameful conduct of several Charter school-masters'.<sup>60</sup> Orde envisaged a role for all local functionaries, both civil and religious, in superintendence. Significantly, however, to the government fell the 'general superintending attention'.<sup>61</sup> To this idea can be traced the origin of a Board of Control.

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*Commons, April 12, 1787 with the debate which arose thereon* (Dublin, 1787), p. 25. See also N.L.I. *Bolton Papers*, MS 16360. Orde's notebook 'Of Education', lists headings with some amplifications of the matters dealt with in his speech.

<sup>58</sup> *Mr Orde's Plan*, p. 33.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>60</sup> Milne *The Irish Charter schools 1730-1830*, p. 102. For an outline of Fitzpatrick's itinerary see Oliver MacDonagh, *The inspector general: Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick and social reform, 1783-1802* (London, 1981), pp 87 - 90.

<sup>61</sup> N.L.I., *Bolton Papers*. MS 16360

The sheer scope and thrust of Thomas Orde's 'Plan' caused problems for the various denominations and did not augur well for any attempt to implement it. The Established Church, in particular, disliked the 'Plan', and its capacity to thwart schemes such as this was convincingly demonstrated by its success in frustrating the efforts by Buckingham - Orde's successor - to bring about Church reform.<sup>62</sup> It was factors, though, of a political and personal nature which were primarily responsible for the failure to pursue educational reform in the 1780s. Vision, without its driving force, succumbed to procrastination, and the matter was handed over in 1788 to a commission of inquiry.<sup>63</sup> The resultant (unpublished) report produced in 1791<sup>64</sup> proposed that the issue of a national scheme of popular education be addressed through an improved system of parish schools in which, for the first time, Roman Catholics would have an input into local supervision and religious instruction. Unlike the 1787 proposals, there was no suggestion of an overarching supervisory and inspection role for a central board. Of the annual expense of £29,300, which it was estimated would be required, none was earmarked for the training of masters. Of the total sum, 80 per cent was to be applied to the cost of instructing the 25,250 'gratuitous scholars' and providing them with school requisites. The balance, £5,775, was to be applied either to the hiring or to the building of schoolhouses, and to the provision of books 'thought necessary for the use of the Sunday schools'.<sup>65</sup>

The niggardly sum of forty shillings, which was the usual stipend allowed by incumbents for the office of teacher of a parish school, was regarded as 'totally inadequate for the performance of that duty'. Worse still, it appeared that in at least half the benefices no school was kept. To redress this, the commissioners proposed that the forty shillings contributed by the incumbent be matched by a similar amount from the vestry and that the position of teacher be combined with that of parish clerk at a gross annual salary of £20. Under this arrangement, it was expected that the parish clerk would also keep a Sunday school. The notion that many of the serving clerks 'may possibly be not altogether fit for schoolmasters' was regarded as little more than a temporary inconvenience. Alluding to the satisfaction given by a similar arrangement in Scotland, it was held that both 'would be improved by the regulation'. The schoolmaster was to be appointed by the vestry. He would be required to take an oath before a magistrate, promising 'faithfully and diligently [to] perform his duty as master', and

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<sup>62</sup> See A.P.W. Malcomson, *Archbishop Charles Agar, churchmanship and politics in Ireland, 1760 - 1810* (Dublin, 2002), pp 230-41.

<sup>63</sup> Its content and fate is closely examined in Kelly 'The context and course of Thomas Orde's plan', *passim*. For comment on weaknesses in Orde's personality see James Kelly, *Prelude to Union, Anglo-Irish politics in the 1780s* (Cork, 1992), p. 78. See also D.H. Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment - the national system of education in the nineteenth century* (London and Toronto, 1970), pp 59-69.

<sup>64</sup> 1791 *Education Inquiry*.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 343.

would 'enjoy his office during good behaviour'. It is notable that the employment of schoolmistresses was not considered. To the existing two hundred parish schools it was proposed to add a further nine hundred, admitting 'indiscriminately' both Protestant and Roman Catholic children. Regarding management, the findings of this Inquiry were truly visionary. For the first time a role in supervision was to be given to Roman Catholics. Two, chosen by vestry, were to be members of a visiting or governing committee. Of even greater significance, was the recommendation that the clergy of each persuasion should be charged with the responsibility for the religious instruction of their respective flocks, and of those alone.

Serious reservations concerning the operation of the Charter schools precluded their inclusion in the commission's plans. This was a result in the first instance of the critical reports on individual schools furnished by Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick between 1785 and 1787. Growing public concern over their operation also attracted the attention of the philanthropist and prison reformer, John Howard who visited all but two of them during the 1780s. His findings, very much at variance with the reports of the local committees, were accepted by the 1791 Education Inquiry. In summarising Howard's findings, the commission reported that

in most of the said establishments the instruction, cleanliness, and health of the children had been most grossly neglected; that they had not been allowed sufficient food, clothing, or other necessities; that in many of these schools they are half starved, half naked, and covered with cutaneous disorders, the effects of filth and negligence, while in some of those the children of the masters and mistresses appear fresh, clean, and in good health.

To these claims were added the observations of some of the Inquiry members who had themselves visited the schools. These suggested that of the forty-four, 'not more than five or six were properly taken care of'. Under-funding, exploitation of the children's labour, 'the inattention and neglect of many of the local committees', and 'the ignorance, gross neglect, and frauds of the masters and mistresses' informed their judgment that

the admission of children into the charter schools cannot be an object of solicitation to their parents or friends, or that respectable persons should be induced to resort to these schools for servants or apprentices.

By way of remedy the commissioners recommended a closer supervision by the Society of the running of the schools, and they drew attention in particular to problems in respect of the clothing and feeding of the children, the right of access to parents, the need for greater specialisation by the schools in particular branches of industry rather than the multifarious efforts then attempted, and a reduction in enrolment to favour better instruction and welfare. Overall, the commission was of the opinion that the

implementation of its proposed plan of increasing the number of parish schools should lead to a corresponding reduction in the number of Charter schools and the suppression of the four nursery schools.

The commission was most explicit in the means it suggested the Society adopt in addressing deficiencies, both academic and moral, among the teaching body. It recommended that

the greatest attention should be had in the choice of masters and mistresses, and therefore persons of qualifications superior to those of the persons employed at present should be appointed; that the master should be qualified to teach the different branches of the mathematics applicable to the trades and occupations for which the boys are destined; that their salaries should be increased; that, previous to their appointment, they should obtain a certificate of their qualifications from some one of the inspectors to be appointed in the mode hereafter proposed; that they shall enter into a bond ... with two sureties ... for their good behaviour and compliance with all the directions of the superintending powers; that they should act as secretaries and accountants of the local committees, and be allowed an assistant in schools where the number of children exceeds fifty; that they (the masters) should take an oath to act faithfully as secretaries and accountants to the local committees, and to make true returns to the board.<sup>66</sup>

The 1791 Report was at its most innovative and radical in its engagement with the matters of management and visiting rights. The right of the clergy of the Established Church to exclusive control was for the first time questioned. The representation of Roman Catholics on a local management committee combined with the right of the priest to impart religious instruction within the precincts of the school was the first official recognition that Roman Catholic fears concerning proselytism would have to be addressed. In effect, it signalled an end to the idea, at least within the administration, that schools could be used as an arm of the Established Church.

While the Report was never acted upon, its contribution to the formulation of subsequent initiatives was significant. It was appealed to when the education question next came before parliament in the late 1790s. The driving force on this occasion was Richard Lovell Edgeworth, who had recently been elected MP for St. Johnston (Longford). Imbued with a desire to fashion and to implement educational reform, Edgeworth offered a bill to the House of Commons in 1799 that went beyond the recommendations of the 1791 Report as regards denominational arrangements.<sup>67</sup> He audaciously proposed that, within a national system, Catholic teachers be appointed by Catholic priests to teach in Catholic schools. He also offered novel ideas in respect of school organisation and teacher training. The areas covered were the sanctioning of text books, a system of inspection, payment by results, and, most notably, certification of

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 'Protestant Charter schools', pp 356-9.

<sup>67</sup>Brian W. Taylor, 'Richard Lovell Edgeworth', *The Irish Journal of Education*, xx, 1, (1986), p. 30.

teachers. In what was the first step towards professionalisation, it was suggested that 'Masters ... should undergo examination, receive certificates of their morals and abilities, and be licensed annually'.<sup>68</sup>

Edgeworth's plan was too radical for a majority of Irish MP.s, and this bill did not receive a second reading and was quickly dropped.<sup>69</sup> Its loss meant that yet another attempt to regulate the superintendence of the popular schools and their teachers had failed. Although constitutionally united with Great Britain from 1 January 1801, educational problems on both islands were dealt with separately, and it was thus logical that the Commission of 1806-12 should re-visit and re-assess the deliberations of its predecessors. This commission, styled 'The Board of Education', produced fourteen reports dealing with all recognised schools and concluding with a 'Plan for the general education of the lower orders of the people of Ireland'. Broadly based, though, crucially, dominated by its clerical members, the appointment of Isaac Corry and Edgeworth provided a tangible link with the earlier stillborn initiatives. Edgeworth's advocacy of a denominational system was successfully opposed by the conservative members. Furthermore, they succeeded in limiting criticism of the existing educational institutions and, critically, ensured that they remained under the control of the Established Church. Consequently, in order to satisfy the demand for a system of education that could command majority support, the church faction 'were forced, reluctantly, to accept that an additional ... school system under a permanent board of commissioners was required'.<sup>70</sup> The resultant united system that was proposed enshrined the historic principal of absolute respect for all religious beliefs. As the commissioners conceived it, it was

of essential importance in any new Establishments for the education of the lower classes in Ireland, and we venture to express our unanimous opinion, that no such Plan, however wisely and unexceptionally contrived in other respects, can be carried into effectual execution in this Country, unless it be explicitly avowed, and clearly understood, as its leading principle, that no attempt shall be made to influence or disturb the peculiar Religious Tenets of any Sect or description of Christians.<sup>71</sup>

This fundamental tenet provided the springboard for all future government patronage in education. It should be appreciated, though, that its application, while it offered protection to all, limited the influence of denominational interests. In this sense, it could serve to allay fears among Protestants of Roman Catholic domination of elementary education throughout large areas of the country.

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<sup>68</sup>Edward F. Burton, 'Richard Lovell Edgeworth's Education bill of 1799: a missing chapter in the history of Irish education', *The Irish Journal of Education*, xiii, 1, (1979), p. 26.

<sup>69</sup>For a detailed commentary on the bill see Burton, 'Edgeworth's Education Bill', pp 24-33. Also for commentary on Edgeworth as an educationalist see Taylor, 'Richard Lovell Edgeworth', pp 27-50.

<sup>70</sup>Hislop, 'The 1806-12 Board of Education ...', p. 53.

<sup>71</sup>*1806-12 Inquiry, Fourteenth report*, p. 328,

The Fourteenth Report, notwithstanding a degree of uncertainty over the manner in which it evolved,<sup>72</sup> is remarkable for a number of features. In proposing the appointment of a Board of Control with wide-ranging powers to oversee the development and running of a national system of elementary schools for the poor, it sought to lessen the effect of local idiosyncrasies and prejudices. More generally, it, too, would function as a safeguard against domination, at the local level, by the prevailing denominational interest.

In the Eleventh Report, that dealing with parish schools, there was a clear effort to avoid unnecessary tension between the Established Church and the administration. The Inquiry recommended that these schools, where functioning, should be encouraged, and, in the interests of equity, that government funding should be made available to supplement local contributions in the provision and maintenance of the network and in providing adequate remuneration for the masters. The acceptance of government money, however, would entail the loss of power by the vestry 'to interfere in the appointment or removal of masters, or in the regulation of the schools'.<sup>73</sup> But, overall, the parish school system was seen as increasingly irrelevant. For the most part shunned by Roman Catholics, it was acknowledged that these schools could no longer meet their primary objective - 'the introduction and diffusion of the English language in Ireland'. Secondly, they had failed to advance the Protestant religion or provide education for the lower classes. Thirdly, certain difficulties which arose were not within the power of the clergy to counteract - a want of funds, a want of buildings and accommodation, a want of co-operation, and a want of masters.<sup>74</sup>

On this final point the commissioners were firmly of the conviction that no advance in the education of the lower orders, whether through parish schools or some future national system, could be achieved

until the want of persons duly qualified to undertake the education of the lower classes be remedied, and till some institution be formed to prepare persons for that important office.<sup>75</sup>

The existence of 'regular plans of education' - those of Lancaster and Bell - was acknowledged, and the need for teachers to be trained in these methods was accepted. Of more immediate concern was the recognition that the low social standing of the teacher militated against the prospect of attracting candidates of suitable calibre. Poor

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<sup>72</sup>Hislop, 'The 1806-1812 Board of Education ...', pp 53-5.

<sup>73</sup>*1806-12 Inquiry, Fourteenth report*, App. No. 2, p. 335.

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid., Eleventh Report ... Parish Schools*, H.C. 1810-11 (107), vi. p. 275.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.* p. 276.



salary, the Inquiry held was the root cause of the failure to tempt a better class of person to act as a master in the common schools. It accepted that even in schools of a higher class ‘proper masters cannot be procured without much difficulty’. In deciding on the location of schools the Inquiry recommended that the commissioners be mindful of the need to provide ‘a proper establishment for the master’. This implied that both his material comforts by way of residence, and his salary prospects should be taken into consideration in the selection of locations. Edgeworth, in a letter to Primate Stuart, a member of the Inquiry, considered that the schoolmasters, from all emoluments, should be in receipt of between forty and sixty pounds annually.<sup>76</sup> Poverty, too, denied the people the opportunity of purchasing books suitable for their children. Instead of books with a religious and moral content, children were exposed to works ‘calculated to incite to lawless and profligate adventure, to cherish superstition, or to lead to dissension or disloyalty’. Under the new system the child should be exposed to books ‘in which moral principles will be inculcated’ and ‘to ample extracts from the Sacred Scriptures themselves’.<sup>77</sup> Again a limited course of secular instruction, for which the pupil paid, was envisaged for the lower classes ‘such ... as is suited to their station in society’.<sup>78</sup>

The reluctance to undermine the authority of the Established Church can be attributed at least in part to the impact of the upheavals - political and sectarian - of the last years of the eighteenth century, and the rise of evangelical Protestantism in the early nineteenth century. Oliver MacDonagh’s observations on the shifting sands of religious toleration in Ireland during the last quarter of the eighteenth and the early years of the nineteenth century support this view. He has described the period from 1775 to 1795 as one ‘marked by a rapid spread of indifferentism among the literate in Ireland, and by the rise of the sentiment that true religion (or humanity) transcended the ecclesiastical poles’. But he noted that from 1795 onwards, (though Malcomson would suggest that reactionary protestantism in the earlier period was never far below the surface), ‘from a variety of causes, sectarianism and passionate religiosity returned to Ireland with redoubled force’ obliging even the ‘technical atheists’ to take sides.<sup>79</sup> While MacDonagh wrote this in the context of its effect in staunching, and in cases reversing, the flow of prosperous Roman Catholics to Anglicanism, it is apparent that the move from liberal to conservative attitudes in religion as well as politics encouraged the adoption of a belligerently defensive stance in both spheres.

This argument in large measure explains the official change in attitude towards the Charter schools. In complete contrast to that of 1791, the 1806-12 Inquiry found the

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<sup>76</sup> 1806-12 Inquiry, *Fourteenth report*, App No. 3, p. 337.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 333

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 330.

<sup>79</sup> MacDonagh, *The inspector general*, p. 23.

institutions 'in a flourishing state, the education in them efficacious and practical, and in every respect such as put them beyond the reach of private defamation or public censure'.<sup>80</sup> Even Edgeworth now supported this view, claiming that this report 'will give an irrefragable proof of the gradual and increasing attention which is now paid to the lowest classes of people in Ireland'. For 'the few instances to the contrary' he included 'a few hints for farther improvement'.<sup>81</sup> In general, his observations on how improvements might be effected, when viewed in isolation, were eminently sensible. Unshaken in his faith in the overall scheme, he had no doubt that if his suggested reforms were implemented not only would the consequent demand for Protestant apprentices have the parents of the poor clamouring for admission for their children, but, also, 'by degrees the foolish prejudice against this mode of education would be eradicated, a circumstance which might in itself be of very high advantage to Ireland'.<sup>82</sup>

The remarkable praise lavished on the schools of the Incorporated Society in the Third Report was matched only by the condemnatory tones of the 1824-6 Inquiry.<sup>83</sup> This sealed their fate. The Incorporated Society in the interim had attempted organisational reform in the face of on-going criticism. Elias Thackery, vicar of Dundalk, conducted a detailed examination of twenty-four of the society's schools in 1817 and 1818, and his reports and recommendations were given the full attention of the governing 'committee of fifteen'.<sup>84</sup> Its efforts on this occasion proved no more effective than formerly. In particular, its venture into teacher training was practically worthless.

The 1824-6 Inquiry confirmed the presence of candidate teachers of low intellectual calibre, dereliction by teachers in their responsibilities to them, and poor discipline.<sup>85</sup> The weight of evidence bearing on the 'great and numerous instances of mismanagement and abuse' prompted the commissioners to question the very principles on which the Charter schools were founded. They were decidedly of the opinion that if children attended 'orderly and well regulated' day schools they would benefit more from the instruction they received and the moral example they were set.<sup>86</sup> In addressing the clear conflict between the evidence presented by John Howard to the 1791 Inquiry and by Dr Daniel Beaufort and John Corneille which formed the basis of the optimistic *Third Report*, the Inquiry concluded that the two gentlemen 'in many cases ... must have

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<sup>80</sup> *1806-12 Inquiry, Fourteenth report*, p. 329.

<sup>81</sup> *Third report from the commissioners of the board of education in Ireland: The protestant charter schools*, H.C. 1809 (142), vii, p. 108 (henceforth *Inquiry of 1806-12, Third report*).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* p. 110.

<sup>83</sup> *First report of the commissioners of Irish education inquiry*, H.C. 1825 (400), xii (henceforth *1824-6 Inquiry, First report ... 1825*).

<sup>84</sup> Milne, *Irish Charter schools*, pp 240-50.

<sup>85</sup> See *Inquiry of 1824-6, First report ... 1825*, Evidence of Francis Devine, Master at Santry, pp 291-6, and Evidence of Andrew M'Ghee, Usher at Santry, pp 288-9.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 29-30.

been, to a certain extent, either deceived by the masters, or misled by the kindness of their own dispositions'.<sup>87</sup>

Arising out of the loss of confidence in the Charter schools and the widely perceived need for major educational reform, John Leslie Foster, who with R.L. Edgeworth, was one of the best informed on educational matters, was drawn to the systems of Lancaster and Bell. Foster in particular advocated the adoption of the approach of these two educationalists. '[The] vast saving of time and expense' appealed to his utilitarian nature. As early as 1805 Lancaster's system had been brought to his attention and he had not been averse to the advice proffered. Formulated with Ireland in mind, the innovator's thoughts on the selection and training of teachers clearly pointed the way forward for the country.

The first object is to train up good teachers, on whose integrity and peaceable disposition dependence may be placed: and in a country where such numbers of young men, desirous of knowledge, are to be met with, it is possible, from the low price of labour, to train and employ them at moderate expense ...

No one designed for this office, should undertake the charge without a proper qualification; an office on which the national morals and the fate of empires often depend. Proper teachers cannot be expected to spring up like mushrooms, completely formed in a night, and well qualified for this most arduous undertaking ...<sup>88</sup>

A realisation that a premium was placed on the attainment of the mere mechanics of reading and a misapprehension regarding the lack of a moral aspect to the system, prompted him to propose that unobjectionable Scripture Readings should also be included on the core curriculum. In line with Lancaster's advice, Foster saw the need for the establishment of training seminaries 'as the first and indispensable preliminary' to increasing the supply of teachers familiar with 'the great improvements in the art of teaching'.<sup>89</sup> With this view Edgeworth fully concurred.<sup>90</sup>

The supervision by the commissioners of the provision and control of books, the prescription of a course and the mode of instruction, together with overseeing the appointment, conduct and dismissal of teachers were the areas where ameliorative measures could be best effected. The report left no doubt that the advancement of government objectives in the provision of elementary schooling depended on the education of the teacher. Historically, moral bearing and limited intellectual ability had been seen as sufficient. Edgeworth proposed a measure of certification as an additional

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<sup>87</sup>Quoted in Corcoran, *Selected texts*, p.138.

<sup>88</sup>*Letter of Joseph Lancaster to John Foster* (London, 1805), pp 12-16.

<sup>89</sup>*1806-12 Inquiry, Fourteenth report*, pp 341-6 - Foster's letter to the Secretary of the Board of Education (John Corneille).

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 340.

safeguard. To this was now to be added a course of training. The Inquiry's recommendation that the present 'ill-taught and ill-regulated schools' be replaced by 'a systematic and uniform Plan of Instruction' demanded a body of trained teachers. This provision was regarded as 'a measure of the highest importance' which should receive the immediate attention of the commissioners. The Inquiry was persuaded

that a more essential service could not be rendered to the State, than by carrying into effect a practicable mode of supplying a succession of well-qualified Instructors for the children of the lower classes.

The details the Inquiry left to any incoming Commission, limiting itself to the observation that certain existing establishments, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, 'might with little difficulty give effectual assistance towards this great national purpose'.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid. p. 332.

## **Teacher Training and the Kildare Place Society**

In England a clear division among the voluntary societies involved in the provision of elementary schooling between established and non-conformist subscribers ensured that some patrons gave allegiance to the National Society, the umbrella group which promoted the religion of the Church of England, while others supported its counterpart, the British and Foreign School Society, that represented the dissenting tradition. This latter group had been formed in 1808 to support the work of Joseph Lancaster. Although he had severed his connection with it by the time the Society was formally constituted in 1814, Lancaster's religious tolerance was faithfully reflected in its 'Rules and Regulations':

... the lessons for reading shall consist of extracts from the Holy Scriptures; no catechism or peculiar religious tenets shall be taught in the schools, but every child shall be enjoined to attend regularly the place of worship to which its parents belong.<sup>1</sup>

This enjoinder coincided neatly with the principle of non-interference central to the recommendations of the Irish 1806-12 commissioners. Taken in conjunction with parliament's unwillingness to become involved directly in the provision of education, conditions in Ireland favoured the prospects of a like-styled voluntary movement embodying both the tenets of religious toleration and utility. Such a group was the 'The Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland' established 2 December 1811.

### **2.1 The influence of Joseph Lancaster**

This Society, more readily known by the name of its eventual Dublin headquarters - Kildare Place - grew out of the School Street School Society which had been founded in 1786 in the Liberties area of Dublin. It had provided both week-day and Sunday schooling for the poor of the area. The enlarged association had as its single aim the education of the poor of Ireland. Its leading principle, pre-figuring the fourteenth report of the 1806-12 commission, was 'to afford the same advantages for education to all classes of professing Christians, without interfering with the peculiar religious opinions of any'.<sup>2</sup> On the basis of this object and principle, it was favoured from 1815 to 1831 with an annual parliamentary grant.

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in D.W. Sylvester, *Educational documents 800 - 1816* (London, 1970), p. 288.

<sup>2</sup>*First report of the society for promoting the education of the poor of Ireland*(1813) (henceforth K.P.S. *First report* ... 1813), p. 4.

The Society justified its interest on educational, social, economic and moral grounds. To counter the morally and educationally deficient schools then ubiquitously present, it defined its purpose as

to procure the establishment and assist in the support of schools, in which the rudiments of knowledge may be obtained in less time, and at less expense, than can be effected in the schools heretofore existing in this country ... in which the peasant and artisan may obtain information *suited to their stations in life*; in which the morals of pupils and instructors shall be attended to, and principles of truth and honesty inculcated.<sup>3</sup>

It was on this basis that the first attempt to provide elementary education for the masses was made. At a practical level this was made possible by the adoption of the monitorial system which owed its origins to the separate, but similar, innovations of Bell and Lancaster. Both methods stressed the principle of self-education. In this they made use of 'monitors' or 'tutors' drawn from among the brightest pupils who, instructed by the master, taught those of inferior ability. Crucially, this allowed the abandonment of individual teaching and the adoption of the then novel approach of group and class teaching. In an era when government intervention was guided by Benthamite thinking and its scope limited by *laissez-faire* principles, the methods of Bell and Lancaster had the distinct advantage of economic utility. They were cheap.

Dr Bell recommended that the children within each school should be divided into classes according to ability. In each class tutors were appointed to assist the others in learning their lessons. An hierarchical pedagogical structure was put in place. The larger the school the more gradations there were. It encompassed the offices of usher, sub-usher, teacher, assistant and tutor. At the pinnacle was the schoolmaster 'whose province it [was] to watch over and conduct the system in all its ramifications'. Indispensable to the effective operation of each school was the role of 'superintendent, or trustee, or visitor, whose scrutinising eye must pervade the whole machine, whose active mind must give it energy, and whose unbiased judgment must inspire confidence, and maintain the general order and harmony'.<sup>4</sup>

Joseph Lancaster is credited with developing his similar system independent of Bell. The 'tutors' he referred to as 'monitors'. His monitorial system was more complex, due in the main to his greater emphasis on rewards and punishments and the encouragement of a competitive spirit among the pupils. Apart from his 'teaching monitors' there was an array of other monitorial duties bearing on the smooth running of the school.

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<sup>3</sup> *The schoolmaster's manual - recommended for the regulation of schools: compiled by the society for promoting the education of the poor of Ireland* (Dublin, 1825), p.15.

<sup>4</sup> Bell, *Analysis of the experiment in education*, p.1.

The need for economy forswore diversity and experimentation. A doctrinaire approach to teaching method was a feature of both schemes. Deviation from instructions was not encouraged. The importance of repetition and written practice was emphasised. If properly implemented, Bell went so far as to claim that ‘... a single master, who, if able and diligent, could, without difficulty conduct ten contiguous schools, each consisting of a thousand scholars’.<sup>5</sup> Both schemes promoted values that the commercial and upper-classes believed should be inculcated in the masses. The labouring poor were expected to be servile, hard-working and dependable. The unquestioning acceptance expected of the pupil in this intensely stratified system was repeated in the dogmatic approach to method impressed on the monitor. Together they combined to make the virtue of subordination to authority the pervading trait of such institutions.

History has not been kind to the efforts of Bell and Lancaster. While accepting that they were instrumental in making possible mass elementary schooling through the novel means of class teaching, a method which has endured, the comments of H.C. Barnard neatly summarise their shortcomings: ‘They determined its mechanical methods, its low standards, its large classes and mass production, its emphasis on cheapness, its low ideals of education.’<sup>6</sup>

Nor were all contemporary social reformers convinced of the efficacy of the method. Although an early disciple, the great social reformer of early nineteenth-century England, utopian socialist Robert Owen became progressively disenchanted with the approach. He promoted a system of factory schools, best exemplified by his New Lanark project. Under the influence of the thinking of Rousseau, he sought a shift in balance away from a mechanistic, inflexible method towards one which had due regard for the nature of the child.<sup>7</sup> In his *First Essay* he acknowledged, after a qualified fashion, the public’s debt to Bell and Lancaster for ‘the beneficial effects, on the young and unresisting mind, of even the limited education which their systems embrace’. Yet within three years he had become a strident critic, clearly identifying the limits of the instruction given. He cautioned that

it must be evident to common observers, that children may be taught, by either Dr. Bell’s or Mr. Lancaster’s system, to read, write, account, and sew, and yet acquire the worst habits, and have their minds rendered irrational for life. Reading and writing are merely instruments, by which knowledge, either true or false, may be imparted; and, when given to children, are of little comparative value, unless they are also taught how to make a proper use of them.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Quoted in Sylvester, *Educational documents*, p. 283.

<sup>6</sup>H.C. Barnard, *A history of English education from 1760* (London, 1966), p. 57.

<sup>7</sup>For a criticism of Robert Owen from the perspective of economic historians see David Hamilton, ‘Robert Owen and Education - a Reassessment’ in Walter M. Humes and Hamish M. Paterson (eds), *Scottish culture and Scottish education 1800-1980* (Edinburgh, 1983), pp 9-24.

<sup>8</sup>Robert Owen, *A new view of society or essays on the formation of the human character* (reprint of

If the poor were to be given both 'a rational and a useful training', Owen stressed the importance of training those who were to impart this instruction. He was contemptuously dismissive of the efforts to train teachers under the monitorial system, believing they were 'conducted on the narrow principle of debasing man to a mere irrational military machine'. He suggested instead the establishment of seminaries where candidate teachers 'should be well initiated in the art and matter of instruction'. He attached the utmost importance to the preparation for this position. It was central to the realisation of his vision of education:

This is, and ought to be considered, an office of the greatest practical trust and confidence in the empire; for let this duty be well performed, and the government must proceed with ease to the people, and high gratification to those who govern.<sup>9</sup>

He too sought the consolidation of social order, but did not believe that it could be achieved by repetitive drilling in the virtue of subservience which failed to acknowledge the poor as rational beings. Rather, the welfare of all depended on fostering the attachment of the masses to the state through their participation in a process of mutual co-operation.<sup>10</sup>

James Mill, the foremost exponent of the Benthamite view of education, saw its necessity in stark terms. In society the choice lay between the people being miserable or happy. His firm conviction in the omnipotence of education led him to proclaim it as the best means 'for rendering the human mind to the greatest possible degree the cause of human happiness'<sup>11</sup>. His view of education, like Owen's, encompassed more than mere acquisition of knowledge. To be effective the exercise of the intellect must also be fostered.

Much contemporary and later criticism of the systems of Bell and Lancaster focus on the manner in which their ideas were put into practice. Of the two, it would appear that Bell was the more blinkered, insisting on the supremacy of the Established Church in matters of faith. He also had little regard for the personality of either the teacher or the child. Lancaster has probably, by association, been somewhat harshly treated. While his belief in religious toleration has been fully acknowledged, his attempt to promote an understanding of the child's psyche and its bearing on the training of teachers has tended

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1816 ed., Clifton, New Jersey, 1972), pp 24-5.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p.168.

<sup>10</sup>For comment on an ill-fated Owenite experiment in Ireland see E.T. Craig, *An Irish commune - the experiment at Ralahine, County Clare 1831-1833* (Dublin, 1983). This is a reproduction of c.1920 ed. with a foreword by Terence O'Brien and essays by James Connolly(1910) and Cormac Ó Gráda(1974).

<sup>11</sup>F.A. Cavanagh (ed), *James and John Stuart Mill on education* (reprint of 1931 ed., Westport, Connecticut, 1979), p.1.



to be overlooked. His view of training was far removed from that of supplying 'a mere irrational military machine' as he made clear in his letter to John Leslie Foster. While convinced of the need to follow 'the method', he was not averse to benefiting from the experiences and practices of others. He recommended that

the best information of the various modes of tuition, practised in the lower, or superior seminaries, as they relate to the simple objects of the proposed [training] institution should be gleaned from every field. The best authors should be daily read and remarks made by the instructor and students; lectures should be read on education, or subjects intimately connected with it; the students required to answer questions, unprepared and *viva voce*; the simple answers to which should naturally be the echo of the lecture; by this means accustoming the youth to exercise their attention on the subject before them. It is but proper that where young men are in training for this important employment, they should have an ample knowledge of its theory, and at all events, be taught actually to reduce that theory to practice.<sup>12</sup>

He was no less definite on the question of the teacher's role and the manner in which he should attempt to relate to the child. He warned that children should be treated

according to what they are, and not according to what they are not; going directly from the playfulness of childhood to the gravity of man, is not consistent with the nature of children.<sup>13</sup>

Consequently, it was the task of the teacher to develop - with attention to both the acquisition of basic literacy and the moulding of a moral being -

the latent principles, or passions that actuate the juvenile mind, and [stimulate] them to usefulness ... This practice should not only be general, but definite and particular; that the art of conveying instruction, remedying bad habits, and creating good ones, might be rendered simple and definite too... The misfortune is they[habits] have been disregarded and neglected in education, in consequence of which, instead of aiding propagation of good principles and good precepts, they have proved inimical to any such thing. The manner and the tendency of their operations should be clearly defined, and become an object of study.<sup>14</sup>

In keeping with Lancaster's ideas on the value of rudimentary education for the masses which would serve utility and emphasise subservience, he too did not anticipate an enhanced socio-economic status for the teacher. Candidate instructors, drawn from the same class as the instructed, were encouraged to entertain modest expectations, to be content 'with homely and economical fare', and, when in charge of schools, to accept 'smaller salaries ... than would be expected by those in more easy circumstances'.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Joseph Lancaster, *A letter to John Foster, Esq. Chancellor of the Exchequer for Ireland on the best means of educating and employing the poor in that country* (London, 1805), p.19.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, pp17-8.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 25.

The lofty thinking of 'philosophical radicalism' and the deeper concerns of Lancaster failed, however, to filter through the sieve of practical utilitarianism. The dominant *laissez-faire* principle combined with an ingrained reluctance to question the right of the Anglican Church to primacy in education matters resulted in quasi-official sanction being given to the various voluntary movements involved in the establishment and running of schools. Their precarious financial positions favoured the adoption of the cost-effective monitorial system. Lancaster's appreciation of the need for teachers to have a grasp of the child's psychological make-up notwithstanding, the day-to-day operation of the schools proved an obstacle to the professional advancement of the teacher. While it did ensure teachers achieved a minimum academic standard, the over-reliance on free child labour to instruct the children through the interpositioning of the various grades of monitor between the teacher and the pupils much diminished the value of their relationship. Its very mechanisation tended to consign the teacher to the role of supervisor. In the public mind this did not foster the idea of a teacher as a professional mediator. If anything it reinforced the view that skill in 'teaching', since much of the work was done by children, was not a prerequisite for the job. Despite these shortcomings, the system of Lancaster and Bell was better than no system at all. The observation of one study that it had the 'negative merit' of precipitating the establishment of a true national system 'by demonstrating that under modern conditions the task of educating the people was too great for the Church, or any voluntary organisation' was particularly applicable to Ireland.<sup>16</sup>

## **2.2 Legacy of the Kildare Place Society**

The failure of the Kildare Place Society to maintain the confidence of the Roman Catholic clergy and hierarchy was its undoing. The reading of Scripture extracts in its schools devoid of any direction as to interpretation proved unacceptable to Roman Catholic authorities. The eventual repudiation of the symbiotic-type relationship which the Society unwisely allowed develop between itself and a number of avowedly proselytising organisations failed to allay suspicions. As the Inquiry of 1824-6 saw it, the Society was a victim of its very own efforts to maintain a balance between different denominational interests. To these commissioners it appeared

that the objection which may with the greatest propriety be urged against the Society, is the very opposite to that which during their course they seem most to have apprehended: they feared that they should be considered as going too far upon the subject of religion; in our opinion, they did not go far enough. While they have abstained as a matter of necessity, from giving particular instruction in religion, they have rested upon a compromise, the terms of which they have never been able perfectly

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<sup>16</sup>William Boyd and Edmond J. King, *The history of western education* (11th ed., London, 1975), p. 307.

to realise, and which, even if realised, no person is of opinion would have been completely satisfactory.<sup>17</sup>

Harold Hislop, has identified a changing balance in the composition of the Society's committee from liberal to evangelical as a significant factor in its inability or unwillingness to empathise with Roman Catholic concerns. This shift was underway even before the onset of the 'second reformation'. Hislop has also identified shortcomings in the management structure that resulted in many of the schools 'quickly succumb[ing] to denominational interests'.<sup>18</sup> In light of the influence of these developments on the course of events, he regarded the efforts of the Kildare Place Society as

a genuine but doomed attempt to create a mixed system, an artificial experiment in a period of political and social change, which proved that the very principle it cherished was unworkable.<sup>19</sup>

The conclusion of the Inquiry of 1824-6 presaged the end of the voluntary Society as an agent of government in the provision of popular education. A search for an alternative ensued. By 1831 a new compromise - separate religious but united secular and moral education - under the control of a government appointed nation board, was ready to be tested. While it took a markedly different attitude to the question of religious education within a national school system, in other areas it benefited significantly from, and was greatly influenced by the unquestioned achievements of the Kildare Place Society. This was particularly true with regard to school inspection, school publications, and teacher training. These successes were freely acknowledged by the Inquiry of 1824-6. They were described as being 'beyond their own most sanguine expectations ... and [conferring] the most extensive and undoubted benefits on Ireland ...'<sup>20</sup>

The Kildare Place Society appointed its first inspector, Lewis Mills, in 1819, though the need had been recognised much earlier.<sup>21</sup> By 1825 the number of inspectors stood at six, two of whom were Roman Catholic. It was later increased to eight. The country was divided into circuits, and it was the stated object of the Society that each school should be inspected annually. Lewis Mills, in evidence to the Inquiry of 1824-6, gave an account of the duties performed by the inspector. In the course of the year he visited and reported upon 'at least 230' schools. His description of a typical inspection indicates a comprehensive approach. Its very breadth, though, suggests that it was more extensive than intensive.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>*Inquiry of 1824-6, First report... 1825*, p. 58.

<sup>18</sup>Harold J. Hislop, 'The management of the Kildare Place school system 1811-1831', *Irish Educational Studies*, vol 11 (Spring 1992), p. 64.

<sup>19</sup>Hislop, *The Kildare Place Society 1811-1831*: i, 5-6 and especially 90-103.

<sup>20</sup>*Inquiry of 1824-6, First Report ... 1825*, p. 58.

<sup>21</sup>H. Kingsmill Moore, *An unwritten chapter in the history of education ...* (London, 1904), p. 306.

<sup>22</sup>See Eustas O hÉideáin, *National school inspection in Ireland: the beginnings* (Dublin, 1967), pp

I am generally in the school at eleven o'clock, if it is a large school, and ready to leave it at about two, provided there are a great number of children in it; I examine into the proficiency of all the classes in spelling, and reading, writing and arithmetic, and into the school accounts, and the conduct of the teacher. I have also to see if the school-house be in good repair or otherwise; and if the patron of the school lives near it, I generally contrive to call upon him for the purpose of receiving his report of the conduct of the master, and any other thing that relates to the management of the school he thinks proper to communicate. If any defect is apparent, I leave memorandums with the teachers to pay attention to that subject, and have it rectified.<sup>23</sup>

The Society was quite clear on the benefits it expected from a systematic inspection of the schools. It ensured that the rules of the Society were enforced, money spent was accounted for, the conduct of the teachers and the proficiency of the scholars were assessed, and co-operation between the Society and the local management committees was maintained. The inspection of the teacher and scholars was not confined to one of mere competence and proficiency in the curriculum subjects; it also embraced the social and moral development of the pupils. It was understood that the inspector would evaluate the extent to which

proper attention is paid to the forming of habits of cleanliness and subordination; and that the conduct of the teachers in such as to secure for them the respect of their scholars.<sup>24</sup>

Eustas Ó hÉideáin, in his valuable monograph on the early days of National school inspection, has demonstrated that there was an indisputable link between the system of inspection put in place by the Kildare Place Society and that employed by the Commissioners of National Education. Considering that systematised inspection was not yet introduced in England, it is not surprising that the Kildare Place model, which was seen to have given satisfaction, was emulated. Ó hÉideáin, by comparing the directives issued to inspectors under both systems, notes that, with only three exceptions, they are practically identical.<sup>25</sup>

The fledgling national system was also happy to utilise the Kildare Place school texts until its own extensive publishing operation was in place. As this suggests, the Society performed important pioneering work in the advancement of literacy amongst the masses. The problem of acquiring suitable school texts was addressed by the Society in much the same way as the National Board of Education later approached the task. It purchased from Joseph Lancaster the publication rights to a number of his compilations,

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16-20. He details the instructions given to inspectors by the Society.

<sup>23</sup> *Inquiry of 1824-6, First Report ... 1825*, p. 517.

<sup>24</sup> *Eleventh report of the society for promoting the education of the poor of Ireland* (1823), (henceforth K.P.S. *Eleventh report ... 1823*), p. 23.

<sup>25</sup> Ó hÉideáin, *National school inspection*, pp 20-31.

which it could reproduce in whole or in part. By the time of the *First Report* in 1813 the publication of a spelling-book was pending, and other texts were in the offing. By the following year the first reader was published. The content of these early works was heavily moral in tone, which was testimony to the Society's belief that the acquisition of mere reading skill, in the absence of direction as to proper civic and religious disposition, was insufficient, if not dangerous. The Society, however, was aware of the limits of their effectiveness if the problem of 'pernicious' books, found both at home and in school, was not tackled. Following its successful application for government funding in 1815 it adopted a twin-pronged strategy. It commenced the publication and distribution of cheap books of 'a moral and instructive' nature, and established lending libraries attached to schools. These publications, which sought a wide readership through their diverse content, ranging from adventure to science, were still propagative in intent, being 'subduedly religious, urging the poor to be frugal and diligent, honest and peaceable'.<sup>26</sup>

The Inquiry of 1824-6 acknowledged that, due to the efforts of the Society, considerable progress had been made in supplanting objectionable publications. Yet, its listing of all books, 'except those of an elementary description,' found in counties Donegal, Kildare, Galway, and Kerry indicated that the task was by no means complete. The account by one of the commissioners of his visit to a school in Sligo testified to the persistence of the problem. He observed

a child holding the New Testament in its hands, sitting between two others, one of whom was supplied with the *Forty Thieves*, and the other with *The Pleasant Art of Money Catching*, while another at a little distance was perusing the *Mutiny Act*, and all reading aloud their respective volumes at the same moment.<sup>27</sup>

Even where more appropriate material was used there was no guarantee that its content was error free. James Glassford - one of the commissioners - on his visit to 'Newry Roman Catholic School' noted that *Murphy's Spelling Tables* '[were] very imperfect and erroneous, with some gross blunders even in spelling, and generally ill-constructed'.<sup>28</sup>

The stubborn survival of works of an objectionable character was symptomatic more of the method of teaching employed in some schools than of the predilection of masters to encourage subversion. Only with class instruction could the adoption of a class reader be promoted as both the logical and economical alternative. Individual tuition favoured the use of disparate reading material. For the poor, this was always likely to be supplied from the morally suspect romantic adventure stories and subversive 'historical' works peddled

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<sup>26</sup>J.M. Goldstrom, *The social content of education 1808-1870* (Shannon, 1972), p. 60.

<sup>27</sup>*Inquiry of 1824-6, First report ... 1825*, p. 44.

<sup>28</sup>Glassford, *Notes on three tours*, p.16.

by itinerant chapmen. Hislop's reservations, calling Adams' more uncritical claims into question, are also worth bearing in mind. He is of the opinion that profiteering by unscrupulous booksellers put the publications beyond the means of those among the general population for whom they were principally intended.<sup>29</sup>

Within its school and library network, the achievements of the Kildare Place Society were impressive by any criterion. By the time of the withdrawal of the government subvention in 1831, the Society had published a total of seventy-nine 'Cheap Books', of which an aggregate total of 1,406,990 copies had been printed. Books to the value of £2,484. 9s. 9d. - amounting to 100,747 volumes in all - were distributed among 1,037 lending libraries.<sup>30</sup> An indication of the importance which the Society attached to publishing is provided by the decision to continue with this venture after the withdrawal of the parliamentary grant. Although it was no longer in a position to award gratuities to teachers, could afford to employ but one inspector, and could make grants of requisites to only the most deserving of schools, it still managed to issue 34,378 'cheap books' in 1835, pushing the total published since 1817 to more than one and a half million.<sup>31</sup>

One area at least in which the National Board of Education did not seek to emulate the efforts of the Kildare Place Society was teaching through, and making publications available in Irish. Such was the Society's concern to discover the extent to which Irish was used as a medium of instruction in schools and its eagerness to evaluate the level of demand that it authorised a sub-committee to report on the matter in 1820.<sup>32</sup> It investigated the efforts that were currently being undertaken to teach through the medium of Irish, calculated the number who stood to benefit, satisfied itself as to the availability of suitable teachers, concluded that it was an object worthy of consideration, and suggested how the Society could best respond.

The considered attitude of the Kildare Place Society towards the usefulness of the Irish language in facilitating the acquisition of English was in stark contrast to that adopted by the National Board of Education. The attitude of the latter could be summarised as one of passive hostility, and it felt warranted in this stance by the fact that there was no demand, either from authorities or parents, that it adopt a sympathetic position towards language preservation. The suggestion of Patrick Joseph Keenan, when a head inspector, that there was merit in bilingualism failed to find official favour, though, in certain areas

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<sup>29</sup>Hislop, *The Kildare Place Society*, i, p. 249; Adams, *The printed word and the common man*, p. 99 ff.

<sup>30</sup>*Nineteenth report of the society for promoting the education of the poor of Ireland (1831)*, (henceforth K.P.S. *Nineteenth report ... 1831*) pp 38-9.

<sup>31</sup>*Twenty-fourth report of the society for promoting the education of the poor of Ireland (1836)*, (henceforth K.P.S. *Twenty-fourth report ... 1836*) p.11.

<sup>32</sup>*Eighth report of the society for promoting the education of the poor of Ireland (1820)*, (henceforth K.P.S. *Eighth report ... 1820*) App. No. IV, pp 49-57.

it must have been the approach adopted. External pressure from Gaelic preservation groups during the late 1870s saw the Board officially adopt what was probably the *de facto* practice in certain areas of using Irish where it was likely to facilitate the acquisition of English.<sup>33</sup> It stopped well short, however, of any attempt to preserve the language, and when obliged, more than half a century later, to enunciate a policy on the Irish language, its thinking was identical to that of the Kildare Place Society.<sup>34</sup>

### ***2.3 Teacher Training***

It would be difficult to over-estimate the influence of the approach adopted by the Kildare Place Society to teacher training. It has been claimed, and convincingly argued that it was the single greatest influence on the development of Irish elementary education throughout the nineteenth century, and that it set the pattern of teacher training that would remain largely unchanged during the period.<sup>35</sup> It certainly shaped the approach of the National Board of Education to the structure and methodology adopted and its attitude to professional development.

The system used was based upon that developed by Lancaster at Borough Road in London. Entrants resided at the establishment for the duration of the course. In its model school they were introduced to the detailed workings of the monitorial system. Initially, the school in School Street served as the Society's model or 'practising' school. Deemed unsuitable for the purpose, parliamentary aid was sought to allow the Society to undertake the construction of a custom-built institution, and the sum of £6,980 was duly granted for that purpose. A site in Kildare Street was acquired, and, in 1819, a school capable of accommodating up to 600 boys and a similar number of girls, along with residential quarters for male teachers, was in operation. To these was added, in the autumn of 1824, a female residential department.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>There is some evidence to suggest that in 'Gaeltacht' areas masters either had no Irish or were unwilling to use it. See Séamus Ó Grianna, *Nuair a bhí mé óg* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1942), lth. 33: 'An maighistir ar chaith mé bunadhas mo chuid ama aige ... ní rabh Gaedhilg ar bith aige. Agus ní rabh Béarla ar bith againne, rud a d'fhág saoghal beag corrach achrannach againn.' Conchúr Ó Síocháin, *Seanchas Chléire* (eagrán nua, Baile Átha Cliath, 1970), lth. 11: 'Sea, a pháiste ... caithfidh tú an Ghaeilge a chaitheamh uait anois agus Béarla a labhairt as so amach.'

<sup>34</sup>For those wishing to study the attitude of the National Board of Education towards the Irish Language and the various language preservation groups the following sources are valuable: N.L.I. *Minutes of the Commissioners of National Education (M.C.N.E.I.)*, 9 Jan. 1834, 27 June 1844, 2 July, 24 Sept. 1878, 9 Dec. 1879, 27 Jan. 1880, 31 May, 11 Oct. 1881, 1 May, 9 Oct. 1883, 19 Feb, 4 Mar., 20, 27 May, 1 July, 23 Sept. 1884, 19 Feb., 4 Mar., 21 Apr., 1885, 1 June, 6 Aug. 1886, 8 Feb. 1887, 21 Jan. 1890; *Twenty-second report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland (1855)*, (henceforth *C.N.E.I., Twenty-second report ... 1855*), App. G., p. 75.

<sup>35</sup>Parkes, *Kildare Place*, p. 36; Hislop, *The Kildare Place Society*, i, 373.

<sup>36</sup>For detailed information on the establishment of the various departments see Parkes, *Kildare Place*, in particular pp 17-36.

Between 1814 and 1832, the Society trained 1,869 male teachers for the schools with which it was connected. By religion they were predominantly Protestant, and, by province, as likely to be from Ulster as from the other three provinces combined (see *Figs I-VI* below) Ulster candidates accounted for 56 per cent of those trained, while the respective figures for Leinster, Munster and Connacht were 20 per cent, 15 per cent and 9 per cent. In keeping with this pattern, 68 per cent of the total were registered as Protestant. Of those from Ulster, this figure stood at 78 per cent, confirming that schools connected with the Society in that province were preponderantly under Protestant patronage. Protestants were also in a clear majority among candidates from Leinster and Connacht where they constituted three-fifths of the total. In Munster, the two religious groupings were almost evenly balanced. It was not contested by Bishops Murray, Kelly and Doyle in their evidence to the Inquiry of 1824-6 that clerical interference had been instrumental in the withdrawal of large numbers of Roman Catholic children from Kildare Place patronised schools, although it was not accepted that this was a deliberate move aimed at exerting influence on the commissioners.<sup>37</sup> This withdrawal was paralleled by a distinct and steady decline in the numbers of Roman Catholics presenting themselves for training. Between 1817 and 1824 they accounted for, on average, 41 per cent of the annual cohort. From 1824 onwards this figure fell year upon year until by 1832 they represented just 20 per cent of the total. Figures for the three provinces of Leinster, Connacht and Munster indicate that the training establishment was more widely availed of by Roman Catholics in the years up to 1826 than the overall national figures would suggest. Roman Catholics provided a majority of candidates from Connacht for six of the thirteen years between 1814 and 1827, while this was true of Leinster for four years, and Munster for eight. Even more revealing are the average percentage figures for the period. In Leinster 49 per cent of those trained were Roman Catholics - the same as the average figure for Protestants in Munster. Of the Connacht candidates, Roman Catholics accounted for 60 per cent on average. From a position of almost equal representation pre-1826, the situation changed markedly thereafter. For Munster the annual average percentage of Roman Catholics in training between 1826 and 1831 was 32 per cent, in Connacht, 27 per cent, and in Leinster, 21 per cent. Overall, Roman Catholic representation in the training institute for the three provinces just about halved.

The comparable figures for females trained are in general agreement with those for males as regards trends, but show that the religious disproportion was even greater. Between 1825 and 1832 a total of 436 teachers were trained. Ulster dominance was not as pronounced, with just 42 per cent of candidates being from that province. Again, Connacht provided the lowest representation at 11 per-cent, while the percentage figures

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<sup>37</sup>*Inquiry of 1824-6, First report ... 1825, App. No. 257, pp 771-98.*



for Leinster and Munster were 29 and 18, respectively. Broken down by religion, the overall figures indicate a ratio of Protestants to Roman Catholics of four-to-one. Again, Munster and Ulster were at opposite ends of the spectrum. Though not as evenly matched as for males, Roman Catholics formed a respectable 42 per cent of the female teachers in training from Munster, while of those from Ulster the predominance of Protestants was a most emphatic 92 per cent. Proportionately, significantly fewer Roman Catholics from Connacht and Leinster were enrolled, the respective figures being 24 per cent and 16 per cent. Over the eight years Protestants accounted on average for 82 per cent of those trained. The figures for Roman Catholics, coming at a time when figures for their male counterparts were already in decline due to clerical objection, always languished in the lower third of the percentile ranking, ranging between 28 per cent and 12 per cent.<sup>38</sup>

Fig. I

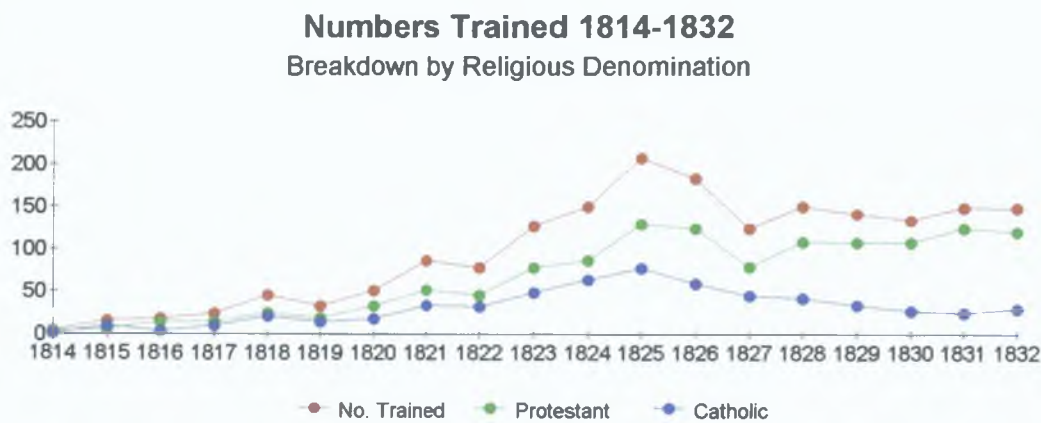
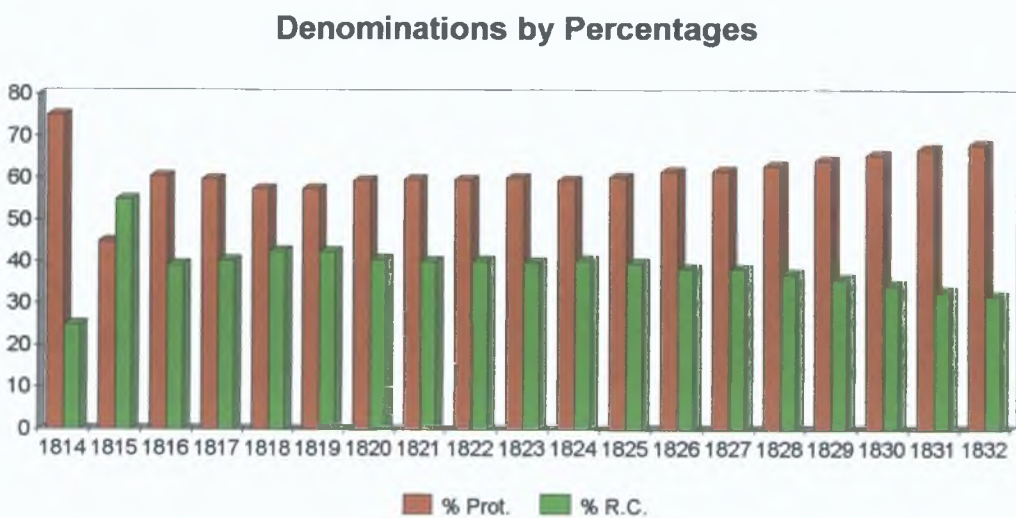


Fig. II



<sup>38</sup>The data presented is taken from the relevant tables in the Annual Reports of the Kildare Place Society, 1814-1832. The *Figures* included are constructed using this data.

Fig. III

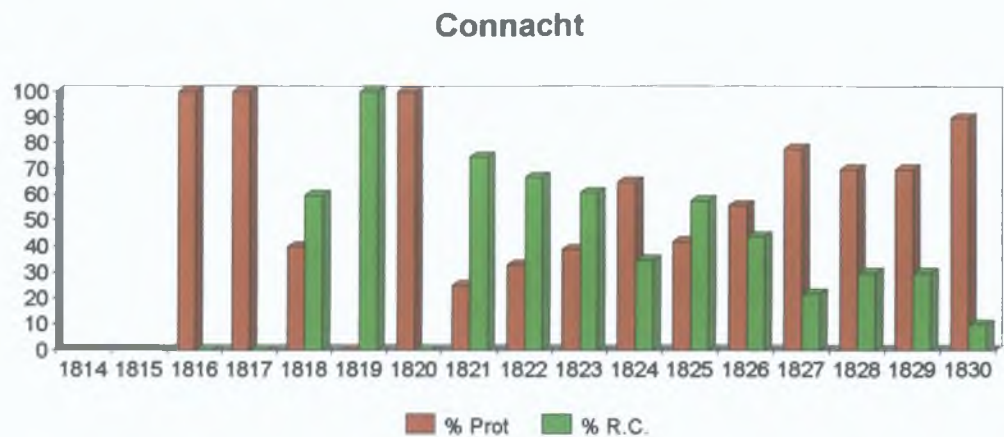


Fig. IV

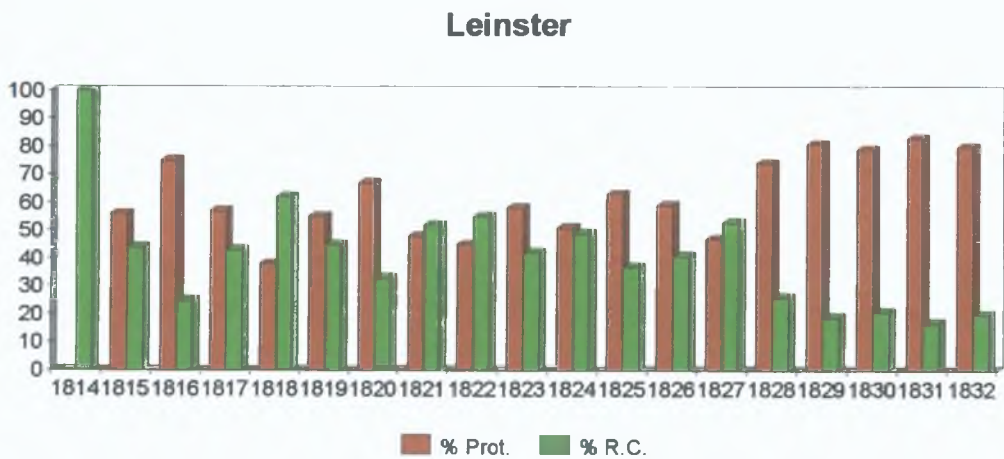


Fig. V

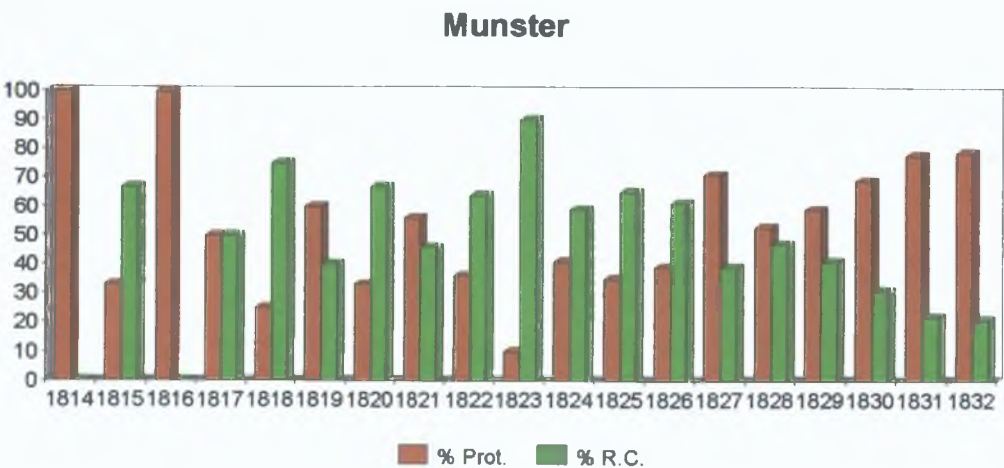
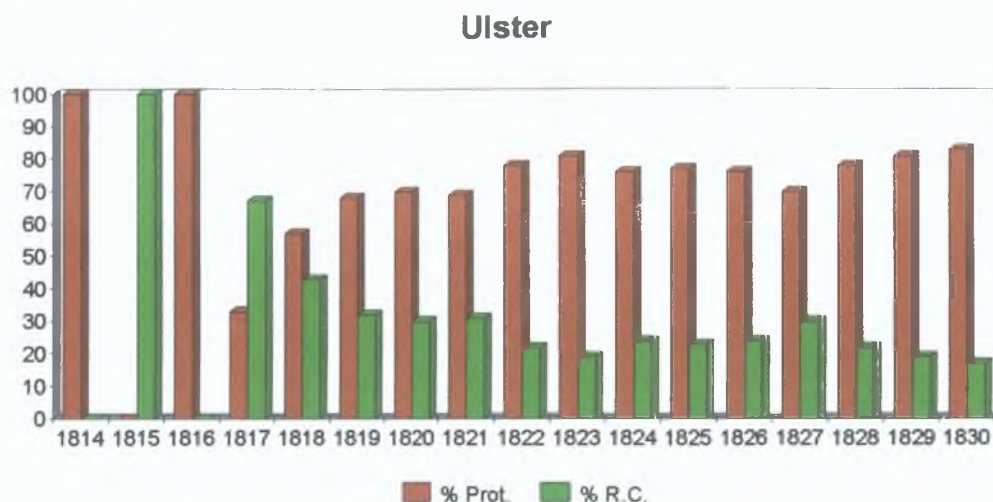


Fig. VI



## 2.4 Teacher Selection

The clear views of the Society as regards the social and moral benefits of a well-regulated system of education for the poor ‘upon a cheap and expeditious plan’ were crystallised in *The Schoolmaster’s Manual*. This neatly drew together the various ‘liberal’ views on education and sought to dismiss the qualms of the unenlightened. At the same time, all were assured that it would not effect a change in social order. On the contrary

it appears to us that the necessary effect of universal instruction, and to the discipline necessary to convey it, must be, to establish those habits of thoughtfulness and foresight, which would enable the poor to add to their comforts, and thereby produce content; to confirm the habits of self control and rational obedience, and thereby produce good order and subordination; and by early inculcating the principles of honesty and truth, to prepare the mind to resist those vices to which they are most exposed ...<sup>39</sup>

Only through the careful selection and training of teachers could the necessary ‘discipline’ be brought to bear. In this matter the Society was in no doubt about the challenge it faced. The desire of the people for education was acknowledged. Poverty did not dissuade parents from seeking education for their children. The *Second Report* referred to instances ‘where both the parent and the child, have cheerfully reduced their scanty means for food and clothing to enable them to pay the monthly pittance to the hedge or village school-master...’. However, the character of these schools gave rise to the most pressing concern. The Society claimed that at best they struggled, due to lack of method, to impart ‘even [a] slight knowledge of letters and figures’, but, more

<sup>39</sup>*The schoolmaster’s manual* (Dublin, 1825), p. 2.

worryingly by far was the absence of moral direction. The books used in them were believed to be ‘often of the most pernicious tendency’, while ‘cleanliness of person, decency of language, and regularity of conduct’ were totally neglected.<sup>40</sup> By 1822, while the Society believed that it had overseen a decided improvement in the quality of education on offer, it was still deemed necessary to remind the public that the quality of teachers remained a matter of concern, and that masters, disreputable both as to character and conduct, totally incompetent ‘to discharge the most important functions of their station’, and entirely neglectful ‘of the morals, habits and conduct of their pupils’ continued to operate.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, members were cautioned against harbouring unrealistic expectations as to the prospect of rapid improvement. They were reminded that to achieve the Society’s aim of ‘[effecting] a moral change in the great body of our people; such a change, to be real and permanent cannot be forced; it must necessarily be slow and gradual ...’.<sup>42</sup> Central to the achievement of its objectives was the training of persons of sufficient academic abilities and impeccable morals as teachers.

Your Committee feel that this branch of your institution is one of the very first importance with a view to the establishment and diffusion of well-ordered education throughout Ireland, and to the consequent improvement of the morals and condition of the people.<sup>43</sup>

The Society itself did not select candidate teachers for training. With the re-creation of the School Street institute as a model school in 1814 the Society advertised through the provincial press for ‘young men, properly recommended, who should be taught and trained to act as school-masters...’. Candidates were to be between the ages of eighteen and thirty years, and to have a mastery of ‘the rudiments of spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic’. It was not anticipated that those accepted for training would have had previous experience of teaching. It was envisaged that they would be sent ‘to superintend or organise schools in different parts of Ireland’ following their period of training, but this does not appear to have been the case. As the system operated, local patrons nominated those they wished to have trained. The testimonial in favour of Pierce Butler, teacher of the ‘Subscription School’ in Callan, submitted by the town sovereign ‘and others’ was probably typical of those received by the Society’s secretary, Joseph Jackson. Having taught at that school for the previous seven years, the memorialists bore ‘willing and ample testimony to his good conduct in every respect, during that long period’. On the completion of the course the now ‘trained’ teacher returned to organise and teach on the Lancastrian system in his patron’s school.<sup>44</sup> Possibly due to the steadily

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<sup>40</sup> *Second report of the society for promoting the education of the poor of Ireland (1814)*, (henceforth K.P.S. *Second report ... 1814*) p.10.

<sup>41</sup> *Tenth Report of the society for promoting the education of the poor of Ireland (1822)*, (henceforth K.P.S. *Tenth report ... 1822*) p. 21.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>44</sup> *Seventh report of the society for promoting the education of the poor of Ireland (1819)*, (henceforth

increasing number of those accepted for training, patrons were warned in 1818 of the worthlessness of nominating incompetent masters, and counselled 'to be exceedingly careful in the selection of the individuals for that purpose'. The requirements were stringent in respect of moral character. It was expected that the candidate teacher

in temper ... should be patient, in disposition mild, but firm, of diligent habits, of unblemished moral character, and fully convinced of the importance of inculcating on the young mind a love of decency and cleanliness, of industry, honesty and truth.<sup>45</sup>

The *Schoolmaster's Manual* was even more explicit, if somewhat inconsistent in its observations on the intellectual standing of the teacher, since it seemed to suggest that the effectiveness of the instruction both with respect to mental and moral formation depended on the teacher's moral probity:

Masters - it is of the utmost importance that he should not only be judicious and intelligent, but that his heart should be engaged in the work. As many of his pupils may not afterwards have an opportunity of acquiring just notions and solid principles, he should remember that it is of vital consequence to them and to society, that the improvement of their mental faculties and of the disposition of their hearts should go hand in hand; he should set them a good example, by never deviating in the slightest degree from the rules laid down for his own conduct; by being patient in temper, and correct in his conversation; but, above all, by strictly adhering to the principles of honesty and truth, and showing the utmost respect and obedience to the sacred word of God.<sup>46</sup>

Effective supervision while in training was hampered in the early days by the want of a residential quarters. Instruction for candidate teachers was provided *gratis*, but they were responsible initially for their own maintenance. In 1817, the Society was in a position to offer a grant to a maximum of five guineas to those who had to seek lodgings in Dublin and who were not sponsored, in whole or in part, by local patrons. Applicants found deficient by the head master could not benefit from this scheme. Obviously, conscious of the limitations of this arrangement, the Society moved in 1818 to consolidate the lodging arrangements and to provide for a measure of supervision. Provision was made also for those who wished to avail of it to board and lodge in the house of 'a respectable person', where the Society made available to them 'moral and instructive books for the employment of their leisure hours'.<sup>47</sup> By the following year the matter had been satisfactorily resolved. With the completion of the Kildare Place complex, accommodation was then available 'under our own roof, and under the immediate and constant observation and control of the superintendent of the model school'. At last the mind of the committee appeared to be at ease:

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K.P.S. *Seventh report ... 1819*) p. 65.

<sup>45</sup> *Sixth report of the society for promoting the education of the poor of Ireland (1818)*, (henceforth K.P.S. *Sixth report ... 1818*) App. IV, p. 43.

<sup>46</sup> *Schoolmaster's manual*, p. 67.

<sup>47</sup> K.P.S. *Sixth report ... 1818*, p. 22.

feeling satisfied that there is greater security for the morals and habits of the young men thus bound to observe regularity in hours and conduct, than there would be if being lodged in one part of the city and instructed in another, they were exposed to the occasions and temptations to misconduct incident to a great Metropolis.<sup>48</sup>

The growing demand for training of females could not be met until collegiate accommodation could be provided. Boarding-out was not an option considered, even as an interim measure. It was not until 1824 that the Society acquired a house adjoining its premises in Kildare Place for use as a female residence. Though the Society was buoyed by 'the prospect of the substantial benefits, likely to flow to the public therefrom', it came at a time when Roman Catholic opinion was increasingly disposed to view the Kildare Place efforts in a sectarian light and to question its aims and objectives. Impervious to this threat, the officers encouraged the members to entertain even more sanguine expectations 'when an adequate supply of well trained schoolmistresses instructed in the means of improving the domestic habits of the poor shall have been sent abroad throughout our island'.<sup>49</sup>

While this department, as with the male, turned out an average of fifty-five 'trained' teachers annually, this was a small proportion of what was needed. Its enduring legacy was the establishment of criteria governing the selection of candidates for training. The intellectual requirements were deliberately kept low. This was prompted by the wish to avoid raising expectations incompatible with the candidate's social origin. Given the power of education, it could be imparted only in a disciplined fashion if it was not to lead to public ferment. It could be entrusted safely only to persons of unblemished character. The problem of reconciling these potentially divergent requirements in the identification of suitable candidates for teacher training was one which the National Board of Education appeared willing to undertake.

### **2.5 The Model School - Its Training Function**

The appointment in 1813 of Londoner John Veevers, a protégé of Lancaster, as head of the model school with absolute responsibility for training, had a profound impact on the course of training offered to prospective teachers. Described by Lancaster, in a letter to the Society committee member Samuel Bewley, as 'of mild disposition and accomplished mind ... a member of the Church of England, but no bigot ...', he openly rejoiced

for Ireland and for the friends of it. You will have in him a practical Joseph Lancaster, who will carry on the work of glory ... I rejoice with joy indescribable at the prospect of

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<sup>48</sup>K.P.S. *Seventh report ... 1819*, pp 23-4.

<sup>49</sup>*Twelfth report of the society for promoting the education of the poor of Ireland (1824)*, (henceforth K.P.S. *Twelfth report ... 1824*) p. 29.



being able to recommend so efficient and trusty a labourer for the good cause of universal instruction without intolerance.<sup>50</sup>

Lancaster further assured Bewley that Veevers was not only capable of organising existing schools, but also of training teachers, 'which he has already done in a way equal to my highest expectation'. Though appointed at the not inconsiderable salary of £200 per annum, Veever's intention initially was to stay in Ireland for a short time. However, in the end, he remained as head of the model school until 1834 and served for some years more on the committee of the Society. His was the seminal influence on teacher training in Ireland.

Central to the training of teachers under the monitorial system was the 'model' school. When opened in 1818 the new model school in Kildare Place was believed to be so arranged that up to five hundred children could be taught by one master 'with as much facility and regularity, as if the school contained but fifty children.' In designing the school the experience of those 'conducting the best schools in the British Islands' was availed of. The particular internal arrangements adopted allowed the system to be adapted to a school of any size. The large size of the Kildare Place schoolroom was justified on the grounds of economy and 'to admit of the training of a sufficient number of schoolmasters'.<sup>51</sup>

Pupils were classed according to ability, and within each class there were a number of 'drafts' under the tutelage of the various monitors. The order and discipline required was clearly set out in *The Schoolmaster's Manual*. Junior classes sat nearest to the master while the most advanced sat furthest away. Scholars could leave their seats only when given permission, exiting to the right 'in a regular and orderly manner'. Directions by the monitors were given by means of a set form of commands. A clock, conspicuously displayed, was regarded 'as almost indispensably necessary ... where so much depends on the regular distribution of time'. At the conclusion of the school day it was expected that the monitors, having returned all equipment to its proper place, would remain behind to receive instruction from the master.<sup>52</sup>

It is clear from the outline offered of the master's duties that he was expected to superintend more than to teach:

He should carefully preserve good order and quietness; anxiously observe the conduct of every pupil; take especial care that the monitors do their duty in their respective classes; *occasionally* hear and instruct his pupils, both individually and in classes.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Quoted in Kingsmill Moore, *An unwritten chapter*, p.165.

<sup>51</sup>K.P.S. *Seventh report ... 1819*, p. 22.

<sup>52</sup>*The Schoolmaster's manual*, pp 63-6.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.* p. 67. Emphasis mine.

In practical terms, his most important duty was to select and train monitors. On this depended the order, discipline and the rate at which the moral and intellectual improvement of the children 'will inevitably be accelerated or retarded'. In choosing his monitors, the advice to master was to select those who exhibited traits of patience and 'gentle temper' from among those 'who evince the quickest discernment, whose eye and ear are most capable of nice discrimination, and whose attention is most exertive'. Mindful of the check which the position put on the monitor's own advancement, it was strongly recommended that the position should be held by an individual for only 'a very limited period of time'.<sup>54</sup>

The teaching methodology to which the teacher in training under the Kildare Place Society was introduced was rigid and inflexible, with strict attention to be paid to 'order and silence'. The scheme, as presented in the *Schoolmaster's Manual*, was tailored to the larger school. The pupils were divided, according to ability, into four classes, and within each, if numbers demanded, there were two sub-divisions. This arrangement required a minimum of eight monitors. In the 'junior' half of the school teaching efforts were directed at giving the pupils the rudiments of reading and writing, with arithmetic not being attempted until Class III. The school-day, 10 a.m. until 3 p.m., was divided into five hour-long lessons. Detailed teaching notes were provided for selected areas in all subjects with directions as to how they might be applied to other aspects of the curriculum. The robotic role assigned the monitor is evident from the instructions provided. In teaching the alphabet to the most junior pupils, using sand trays, the monitor was directed to

first [fix] the attention of the pupil by saying 'prepare'; the pupils then bring up their right hand, and place the 'styles' with which they are provided, on the ledge of the desk; the monitor then points at the letter, and pronounces it distinctly and aloud, and the pupils immediately trace the letters in the sand with the style; this being done, the monitor commands 'hands down' and then proceeds to examine the letter formed by each pupil, requiring them to name the letter, and correcting such as are badly formed.<sup>55</sup>

The use of set (and immutable) commands by the monitor was matched by the explicit directions he was expected to follow regarding his comportment in delivering a lesson. For example, in teaching the alphabet to small groups 'at semi-circles', he was instructed to place the pointer, 'which he holds in his right hand, under the letter, then [to point] with the forefinger of his left hand to a scholar, who names the letter'.<sup>56</sup> When the letters were mastered the child progressed to simple monosyllabic combinations, and thence to

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid. p. 68.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 39.



more complex forms and polysyllables. Writing followed a similar pattern. The most junior pupils traced single letters in sand, those in the second division of Class I repeated this operation, this time on slate, while in the two intermediate classes, the child progressed from writing single letters to complete words and sentences on slate. Only in Class IV was paper provided for written work.

The teaching of arithmetic followed an equally rigid course. As with the alphabet, the children in the lower classes learned to count, to recognise and to write the numerals, first in sand and then on slate. An introduction to 'tables' was the formal initiatory lesson in arithmetic. Various drills were advised and algorithmic processes were to be adhered to strictly. Only in basic tables does there appear to have been an effort to ensure the children had a practical understanding.<sup>57</sup> Reinforcement at the more advanced levels depended on repetitive drilling.

The course of training lasted, at first, from three to four weeks. This was later extended to one of six to eight weeks. It would appear that the varied length was an attempt to accommodate those who were slower in mastering the method. Besides method, the teacher was also grounded in school organisation and planning, and the keeping of school records and accounts. On graduation, teachers were awarded certificates indicating their level of accomplishment. Initially they were classified as 'Fully Competent', 'Competent' and 'Having had an opportunity of being made acquainted with it'. These were later simplified to first, second and third class certificates. If, after eight weeks, a teacher had not reached the required standard, following his examination by John Veevers, he was allowed remain an extra month. If after that time a satisfactory level of competence was still not displayed, he was sent away without a certificate.<sup>58</sup>

The lack of any systematic training heretofore and the consequent interest which the Society could not satisfy demanded a rapid turnover if any significant progress were to be made in meeting the need to provide trained teachers. Concern at the brevity of the course was tempered by the fear of over-education of the teacher in training. It was important that expectations be kept low. This fear was adverted to by Samuel Bewley during his evidence to the Inquiry of 1824-6. At that time about 240 male and 150 female teachers were passing through the training institute each year. When asked for his views on the propriety of a three to five-year course for teachers he was extremely sceptical, believing that teachers who were removed from their localities for such long periods would no longer be able to empathise with the people, nor would they be accepted by them. '[They] might be made too great gentlemen ... they would be looked

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<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>58</sup>Parke, *Kildare Place*, p. 25.

upon as a different race of beings, as foreigners.'<sup>59</sup> This view proved enduring. Cardinal Cullen, for one, had serious reservations about a highly educated workforce of teachers:

Where poor children are to be taught the lowest elements of letters, all the teachers ought not to be required to have high secular attainments, and if they be required to have them, they may not unite them with the power of teaching.<sup>60</sup>

The limited time in training, the need for economy and a disinclination to further the teacher's own education resulted in the emphasis being placed on the acquisition of method and an understanding of the arrangements necessary for its successful implementation. Incidentally, this utilitarian approach ensured that the more philosophical aspects of Joseph Lancaster's thoughts on the need for trainee teachers to be familiar with the current debate on education and to develop an appreciation of the child's mentality were not accorded due consideration. It must be acknowledged, though, that the Kildare Place Society did not opt for the lowest common denominator. As early as the 1815, a specially formed sub-committee recommended that higher branches of learning be aspired to than those routinely attempted under the Lancastrian system.<sup>61</sup> As a result, it has been argued that the Kildare Place publications were superior to those of the British and Foreign Society in that they promoted a more philosophical approach, and that, especially with regard to arithmetic, they exhibited a 'predominance of mind over mechanism'. The adoption by the British society of a number of the Kildare Place adaptations and innovations sustains this conclusion.<sup>62</sup> As this suggests, the Society did not confine itself to the method of Lancaster in the area of arithmetic. The 1821 *Report* informed the members that, by way of experiment, the Pestalozzian method of teaching arithmetic, which for some time had been practised in Viscount De Vesci's Abbeyleix school, had been introduced to the model school. Such had been the success of the trial that it was by then generally in use.<sup>63</sup>

The educationalist Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) was essentially practical in his approach and believed that the child could truly learn only through sense experiences. These he divided into a three-stage progression - counting, measuring and naming - from the simple to the complex. This framework, he believed, could be applied to the basic elementary school subjects of reading, writing and arithmetic. It is worth noting that although Pestalozzi's child-centred approach was the antithesis of that commonly found

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<sup>59</sup> *Inquiry of 1824-6, First report ... 1825*, p. 449.

<sup>60</sup> Powis, iv, 1241.

<sup>61</sup> *Third report of the society for promoting the education of the poor of Ireland (1815)*, (henceforth K.P.S. *Third report ... 1815*) App. No. VII, pp 58-9.

<sup>62</sup> Kingsmill Moore, *An unwritten chapter*, pp 233-9.

<sup>63</sup> *Ninth report of the society for promoting the education of the poor of Ireland (1821)*, (henceforth K.P.S. *Ninth report ... 1821*) pp 28-9.

under the monitorial system, he was at one with Bell and Lancaster in believing that education should be employed to underpin rather than threaten the existing social order:

The child of the soil and the whole class of landless agricultural labourers must learn in their language lessons to express themselves accurately about everything that has to do with their calling ... But laborious toil is their lot in life, and their language lessons must not set up interests which would undermine the bases of their happiness and well being ... Education should enable men to follow their particular calling with Godliness and honour.<sup>64</sup>

Similar sentiments were expressed later by Cardinal Cullen in evidence to the Powis Commission. He recommended only a very limited secular curriculum for the National school accompanied by 'a practical and well-founded knowledge of the doctrines and duties of religion'. His fear was that over-education

will make the poor oftentimes discontented, and will unsuit them for following the plough or for using the spade, or for hammering iron, or for building walls. The poor ought to be educated with a view to the place they hold in society, in which it will be impossible for them to cultivate the higher branches of literature and science.<sup>65</sup>

When compared with the primary concern to acquire detailed knowledge of method and school organisation in the minimal time allotted to training, the dabbling of the Kildare Place Society in the Pestalozzian approach can have had but little effect. This is all the more apparent when set against the background of developments elsewhere. In Prussia, thirty-eight 'normal' schools were established, all following the principles of Pestalozzi, between 1817 and 1840. Even more significantly, the course was of three years' duration.<sup>66</sup> In general the European model as it developed throughout the nineteenth century tended towards the lengthening of courses allowing opportunities for the furtherance of teacher education as well as training. Ireland and England remained rooted to the 'training-on-the-job' apprenticeship approach through the use of monitors and later pupil teachers, with a short final course in teaching methodology and school organisation. It is probably unfair to attribute responsibility for this rather dubious legacy with its profound implications for the social and academic status of the teacher to the Kildare Place Society. It had more to do with the general mindset of the day. It encouraged nothing more than that required for the rudimentary and socially conforming instruction that passed for the teaching of a subordinate class.

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<sup>64</sup>Quoted in Mary Sturt, *The education of the people - A history of primary education in England and Wales in the nineteenth century* (London, 1967), p. 5.

<sup>65</sup>Powis, iv, 1241.

<sup>66</sup>James Bowen, *Western education*, iii, 260.

## 2.6 Patrick Kennedy's reflections

The annual reports of the Kildare Place Society are largely bereft of information and insights into the experiences of the individuals who underwent their course of training. This deficiency can be remedied, at least partially, by the memoir of the nineteenth-century author Patrick Kennedy, writing under the pseudonym 'Harry Whitney', of his days in the Kildare Place training establishment.<sup>67</sup> Kennedy (1801-1873) entered Kildare Place for training in 1821, and, until his decision to forsake the career in 1843, taught in his school at Tombrick, Co. Wexford, and later at a number of Dublin schools. As Kevin Whelan has observed, Kennedy's lack of imagination as a novelist is the very factor which underscores the value of his work as an accurate social commentary.<sup>68</sup>

A camaraderie, bridging religious and geographic divides, struck him forcefully. This, Kennedy believed, was helped in no small degree by the Society's prohibition of discussion on all 'polemical subjects'. While occasionally the practice of voluntary assembly for Bible reading was used as a pretext by a 'zealous Presbyterian' to discommodate Roman Catholics, they refused to be drawn and 'so the matter passed off appropriately without note or comment'. As far as Kennedy was concerned the Society's officials 'were thoroughly innocent of any attempt at proselytism' within the training establishment and the model school.<sup>69</sup> Much of this must have been due to Veevers' influence. He was held in awe, and though regarded as distant, his qualities of 'equity and benevolence' inspired devotion.

Kennedy's comments on the academic standing and application of the teachers in training are equally revealing. A number of the monitors possessed little by way of zeal, judgement or diligence, but this was also true of some of the teachers in training. Of his cohort, in general, he regarded them to be 'possessed of a respectable knowledge of English literature, and mathematics', while some were not unacquainted with the classics. Here he noted a division in aptitude between trainees from Ulster and elsewhere. The former were better grounded in science and 'general information', while the latter were more likely to possess a knowledge of the classics. 'A few noodles' appear to have been common to both groups. This account also indicates that study time outside of school hours was almost invariably given over to evaluation and preparation, not to academic advancement. As to probity, Kennedy knew

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<sup>67</sup>Harry Whitney, *Legends of Mount Leinster* (Enniscorthy, 1989). This is a facsimile reproduction of 1855 original.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, See 'Preface'.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 235.

several individuals among them distinguished by an extreme simplicity and honesty of character, and a real living spirit of religion, and those qualities were joined, in several instances, to true natural politeness and urbanity.<sup>70</sup>

Academically, Kennedy's own flair appears to have been in the area of mathematics, to which he devoted a large section of his account, detailing the Pestalozzian approach to problem solving. The use of appropriate teaching aids, the tackling of problems by easy stages, and the application of logical reasoning ensured that 'there was no gabbling over of meaningless terms, and no learning of mechanical rules by rote'. The 'intuitive clearness of perception' acquired and the judgment which could be successfully brought to bear on new problems encountered was, he concluded, of enduring value.<sup>71</sup>

He was, inevitably perhaps, less content with the disciplined and mechanistic approach to the control and teaching of children promoted by the model school, or with the level of regulation applied to certain aspects of the teachers' lives while in training, mostly pertaining to domestic duties and arrangements. The use of free time, however, was totally at the discretion of the individual and Kennedy fully indulged his bibliophilia through regular visits to Dublin's book stalls.

Patrick Kennedy forsook teaching in favour of a life as a bookseller, an organiser of a lending library, and a fringe member of Dublin's *literati*. However, his fond memories of the time spent in Kildare Place and especially his appreciation of the Society's pioneering efforts at teacher training never dimmed.<sup>72</sup> His concluding comments display an understanding and a measure of fellow-feeling for its aims and objectives which time, with its increasingly polarised attitudes, denied later commentators. He enjoined his readers to overlook the occasional human failings of this band of teachers, and called on them to acknowledge their contribution:

[S]peak well of him in your children's hearing; when he visits your house give him the warm corner at your fire, and the chair of honour ... salute him cordially at church, and chapel, and market; and if possible, let not dire poverty take her seat on his cold hearth.<sup>73</sup>

In Kennedy's estimation, the good teacher stood next in rank to the minister of religion. He felt otherwise with respect to those educators that were deficient in temperament and application - given to dissolute living, habitual maltreatment of his charges, 'dreamy

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 230.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 222.

<sup>72</sup>Significantly, his experiences tally closely with the reconstruction attempted by Moore of life in the Society's training institute. His representation of student life, in the form of a vignette, centred around the imaginary character 'Redmond Sheridan' - a teacher in training from the south of Ireland (Kingsmill Moore, *An unwritten chapter*, pp 181-201).

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 239.

reverie, or private occupation', since his advice in these instances was no less clear - 'send him forth to seek his fortune elsewhere'. Kennedy was keenly aware of, and fully in agreement with the higher academic standards expected of teachers under the National Board of Education, but this did not prevent him from robustly defending the performance of the Kildare Place Society and clearly identifying the importance of its contribution to the training of teachers in Ireland:

... the Kildare-place Society called itself 'THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING THE EDUCATION OF THE POOR OF IRELAND,' and limited its efforts to make its teachers capable of imparting sound instruction in the most natural, agreeable, and effective manner possible, in those elementary sciences only, for which they considered the children of the poor to have time; and they accordingly made to be taught in an efficient manner, reading, writing, and arithmetic; composition, grammar, book-keeping when feasible, and geometry in its outline; and rigidly insisted on habits of cleanliness and order.

... The schoolmasters now ... under the National Commissioners, while comparing the matured operations of the present educational system with our more humble performances, are requested to consider that we deserved credit as breakers of unworked ground at least, and to believe that the limited task proposed was well done, and that we had to unlearn nothing.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., pp 239-40.

## **PART TWO**

### **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MODEL SCHOOL NETWORK**

## **The National System and Teacher Training 1831-46**

The failure of the Kildare Place Society to win broad Roman Catholic support obliged the government to examine afresh its approach to the provision of popular education during the latter half of the 1820s. The position of the voluntaryists was deemed to be unsustainable and they were dispensed with. Instead, the authorities opted for a government-appointed board of seven commissioners, both clerical and lay, representative of all denominations, though more in proportion to the influence they exercised rather than the numbers they represented. The celebrated letter of Edward Stanley to the Duke of Leinster, of October 1831, inviting him to become chairman of a Board of National Education, set out in clear terms the basis on which the proposed national system of elementary schools would function. Similar to the Kildare Place Society schools, stringent safeguards were to be put in place to protect against interference in individual religious beliefs. Unlike the earlier initiative, specific religious instruction was to be provided for all denominations as required. Multi-denominationalism was expected to prevail. It was hoped that the spirit of co-operation at the level of the Board would be replicated in the willingness of the elite of the various denominations to become involved in the management of individual schools.

With respect to teacher training the Stanley letter advocated the establishment and maintenance of a model school in Dublin - essentially proposing that the system of the Kildare Place Society be adopted. This the Board did. But, almost from the start, the commissioners were of the opinion that a scheme of preparatory training for candidate teachers was required, and that this could best be achieved by means of a network of district model schools spread throughout the country. However, it was not until 1845 that the Board was in a position to proceed with this initiative. In August of that year, under the terms of its Charter of Incorporation, the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland were authorised 'to erect, maintain, and support in all places of that part of our said United Kingdom called Ireland, where they shall deem the same to be most necessary and convenient, such and as many Schools as they shall think proper'<sup>1</sup>. It enabled the commissioners to proceed with a scheme, first mooted in 1835<sup>2</sup>, for the

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<sup>1</sup> *Twelfth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland, 1845* (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Twelfth Report ... 1845*), p. 314; *M.C.N.E.I., 21 and 28 Nov. 1844*: A letter in reference to the Incorporation of the Board was drafted at the Board Meeting of 21 Nov., and transmitted to the lord lieutenant. Notice of his approval was reported to the meeting of 28 Nov.

<sup>2</sup> C.N.E.I., *Second report ... 1835*, p. 6.



establishment of a nation-wide system of model schools, under their exclusive control, in which candidate teachers could undergo a course of preparatory training.<sup>3</sup> These schools, it was believed, would fill a void in the national system, supplying a missing link in the chain of the professional development of the teacher that would allow the lowliest pupil in the Board's elementary schools to aspire to the loftiest position within its central administrative establishment.

### **3.1 Early provision for training**

Heretofore, the Board had been confined, principally by financial constraints, to providing training for those already practising as teachers. This was in line with the practice of the Kildare Place Society but was not consonant with the administration's thoughts on teacher training. These were expressed in the Stanley letter. The official position was that in the cases of newly established schools only, the teacher 'shall have received previous instruction in a model school to be established in Dublin'.<sup>4</sup> For practical reasons it was not envisaged that this provision would apply to existing schools. The expectation was that, over time, the untrained would be replaced by those trained.

Pursuant to Stanley's letter, the Board, as soon as was practicable, fitted up the out-offices of its first premises in Merrion Street as a model school under the headmastership of Alexander McArthur. In addition to having charge of the male and female departments, he was also superintendent of the training department. McArthur, brother-in-law of the Reverend James Carlile - the Board's first resident commissioner - was a Scotsman.<sup>5</sup> He had previously taught at the parochial school in Bathgate, some eighteen miles from Edinburgh, and later at the Circus Place School in Edinburgh, which was 'founded for the education of the higher ranks.'<sup>6</sup> McArthur was invited by Carlile to move to Dublin, initially, to teach in a school under his patronage. He was appointed to the model school by the Board on a salary of £300 *per annum* in February 1832 on the recommendation of his mentor 'feeling quite confident that he was fully capable of superintending' that institution.<sup>7</sup> While McArthur had overall responsibility for the running of the institute, Mrs. Julia Campbell, who because of personal circumstances was forced to resign as head of the Kildare Place female model school,

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<sup>3</sup>It is worth noting that Akenson suggests that, in the absence of any other legislation regarding the national system of education, the terms of the charter also restricted the Board's range of action. (Akenson, *The Irish education experiment*, p. 135).

<sup>4</sup>*First report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland, 1834* (henceforth C.N.E.I., *First report ... 1834*), p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>Goldstrom, *The social content of education*, p. 64.

<sup>6</sup>*Minutes of evidence taken before the select committee of the house of lords on the plan of education in Ireland*, H.C. 1837 (543-11), (henceforth *New plan of education ... 1837*) viii, pt. ii, Evidence of Alexander M'Arthur, p. 290.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, Evidence of James Carlile, p. 23.

was appointed in February 1833 as head mistress of the female department at £90 *per annum*.<sup>8</sup> This appointment, both Parkes and Hislop suggest, was a significant factor in bringing the influence of the Kildare Place Society to bear on the pattern of teacher training pursued by the national school system.<sup>9</sup>

The Board made its first attempts to acquire suitable residential quarters for male and female teachers called to training at the beginning of 1833. Their interest centred initially on No. 9, Henrietta Street. A price of two thousand guineas was agreed with the vendor and Jacob Owen<sup>10</sup>, the architect, had his outline plans sanctioned by the Board in July of that year.<sup>11</sup> However, it was obvious by 20 March 1834 that the Board was no longer interested in purchasing this premises and that its attention now focused on Tyrone House and its grounds in Marlborough Street. The approval of the lord lieutenant was secured at a meeting of 7 July attended by Archbishops Whately and Murray and the resident commissioner. To further the project, the lord lieutenant indicated that a memorial should be addressed to him by the commissioners stating their objects and seeking the sum of £17,000 from the government to carry them into effect. Clearly the matter could not be regarded as a *fait accompli* as

his Excellency fully concurred in the suggestion that Mr. Carlile should repair to London, in order to give every assistance in his power and every necessary information which His Majesty's Government might require upon the subject matter of this memorial.

The backing of the Irish administration for, and the lobbying by Carlile on behalf of the project bore fruit. The Board was informed in August that it had been voted £15,000 above its normal grant by the House of Commons to assist it in its objects. By October, Tandy, solicitor and agent for the Marquis of Waterford, informed the Board that their bid of £6,750 for Tyrone House had been accepted, and Owen was instructed once more to prepare plans and specifications.<sup>12</sup> However, matters did not proceed as smoothly as hoped. There are indications that communications between the lord lieutenant and elements within his administration were not what they should have been. In response to the Board's estimates' submission for 1835, the chief secretary, Sir Henry Hardinge, questioned its authority to enter into a contract for the purchase of Tyrone House without the sanction of the Treasury. In reply, the Board pointed out that the authority

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<sup>8</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 28 Feb. 1833.

<sup>9</sup>Parkes, *Kildare Place*, p. 36; Hislop, *The Kildare Place Society*, i, p. 373.

<sup>10</sup>Jacob Owen was the architect to the recently founded Board of Public Works. According to Rena Lohan, citing the unpublished 1872 Lansdowne report, the Board of Works was responsible for the Marlborough St. training establishments, the Albert Model Farm in Glasnevin, 24 model agricultural schools, 17 district model schools, 6 minor model schools, and 518 ordinary national schools. (*Guide to the archives of the Office of Public Works* (Dublin, 1994), pp 38-9.)

<sup>11</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 31 Jan, 16 May, 13 June, 28 July 1833.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid*, 20 Mar., 3, 10 July, 21 Aug., 2 Oct. 1834.

was given verbally by Lord Melbourne to the Duke of Leinster, Carlile and Blake when they met him in London, and that since he was then First Lord of the Treasury they considered his sanction 'as substantially the act of the Treasury.' Furthermore, they informed the chief secretary that they were advised by Lord Melbourne that since it was too late to amend the estimates for that year, the commissioners should proceed to complete the project immediately and apply to have the necessary sum included in the estimates for the following year. They also pointed out that in the original Stanley letter they were expressly directed to establish and maintain a model school in Dublin.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the reservations of the Treasury, a sum of £6,450 was paid over in September 1835, and tenders were sought for the erection of six new buildings on the property. The nine tenders submitted ranged in price from £12,232 to £18,420, but, smarting from the rebuke of the Treasury and with only half the required sum in their possession, the Board sought tenders for three of the proposed buildings only - the Porter's Lodge and Bookshop, the Boys' School and the Girls' School. These tenders, from the same nine contractors, ranged from a high of £8,580 to a low £4,990. Since £5,000 only was allowed in the estimates for these buildings and 'the Commissioners [did] not deem it expedient to exceed this sum in accepting any of these proposals...' the contract was awarded to the lowest tender.<sup>14</sup> The Board sanctioned the expenditure of a further £2,110 on repairs and refitting, while the proposal of the Hibernian Gas Company to supply gas at a rate of 13s. per 1,000 cubic feet was likewise sanctioned. Matters proceeded rapidly thereafter, and the Board was in a position to hold its first meeting in Tyrone House on 14 April 1836.<sup>15</sup>

The direct involvement of the Board in the design and erection of its establishment in Marlborough Street came to a close at this point. In March 1836, at the prompting of the lord lieutenant, Earl Mulgrave, the question of ceding responsibility for the project to the Board of Works was raised. By May, when the Treasury inquired whether the annual grant of £35,000 included provision for Tyrone House, the commissioners suggested that estimates relating to it might be transferred to the Board of Works, being of the opinion that this body would undertake the necessary contracts and superintend the work. This minute was submitted to the lord lieutenant and evidently met with his approval as a further £11,650 was voted by the House of Commons for the completion of the new buildings in Marlborough Street that August. Whatever residual interest the Board of National Education may have had in overseeing this project was officially terminated at the beginning of September when the government 'intimated that the Board of Works was to have control and superintendence of these buildings'.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 30 Jan. 1835.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 1 Oct. 1835.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 8 Oct., 17 Dec. 1835, 14 Apr. 1836.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 24 & 31 Mar., 4 June, 18 Aug., 1 Sept. 1836.

The failure to complete the acquisition of the Henrietta Street premises meant that the Board could not provide residential accommodation for those teachers summoned to Dublin for training in 1834. This remained the situation until a premises in Glasnevin was acquired in 1838 as a residence for male teachers. In the interim, trainees were granted a weekly allowance of twelve shillings towards Board and lodging, and a travel allowance of 3*d.* per mile to and from Dublin 'to be computed from the next post town.' The Board proceeded on this basis with the training of male teachers, and the secretary reported at the meeting of 8 February 1834 that training had commenced.<sup>17</sup>

Such arrangements were not acceptable with respect to female teachers and no scheme of training was brought into being for them at this period. Indeed, the one recorded request from a female teacher, a Mrs. Cole, to be taken into training was denied.<sup>18</sup> The Board's efforts to provide a residential building for female teachers date from the end of 1835 when Owen recommended the investigation of a plot of vacant ground in Talbot Street abutting the Marlborough Street property. Following a favourable report from him, the purchase of the site was completed in March 1836. However, efforts by the Board to further the project were beset by difficulties. These derived in the first instance from the reluctance of the Treasury, which was anxious to identify savings in the late 1830s,<sup>19</sup> but there was also a question over the commitment of some of the commissioners to the need to train females as fully fledged teachers. Dr McArthur, in evidence to the House of Lords Inquiry in 1837, stated as his belief that 'the commissioners thought it would be better that they [females] would teach only sewing and needlework; that male teachers should teach the females'.<sup>20</sup> The matter was left in abeyance during the late 1830s as a result, and it was only on the receipt in November 1840 of a bequest of £1,000 from the widow of Thomas Drummond, the late under-secretary, that it was again pursued. The terms of the bequest specifically stated that the money could be applied only to the provision of a training establishment for females. Still, progress was slow. When the building had not been started in early 1842, it was agreed, on a motion of Archbishop Whately, to call up twenty-five women teachers to training, even though it involved boarding out. The twenty-five were to be chosen by the superintendents as follows - one from each of twelve[unnamed] districts, and thirteen from the remaining. The usual travel allowance was authorised to be paid, but only eight shillings per week was allocated towards board and lodging. This was the amount computed for the maintenance of each male teacher in residence at Glasnevin.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 9 Jan., 8 Feb. 1834.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 17 Nov. 1836.

<sup>19</sup>In particular see *Fifth report of the commissioners of national education ... 1838* (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Fifth report ... 1838*), App. pp 14-7.

<sup>20</sup>*New plan of education ... 1837*, p. 306.

<sup>21</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 27 Jan, 3 Feb. 1842.

The commissioners were also determined to ensure the close supervision of the teachers while in Dublin as they instructed that:

Female teachers in training are to leave their address in Dublin with the Professors: and the managers of the schools are to be informed that the Commissioners will not hold themselves responsible for the moral control of the Teachers during the period of their attendance at the Model Schools.

The training of female teachers commenced on this basis on 1 March 1842 when twenty-two of the selected school mistresses presented themselves for training.

By the following October the plans for the Female Training School were adopted and Jacob Owen was in a position to advertise for tenders. The inclusion of a steam apparatus for washing and cooking in the building specifications provided a vivid illustration of the importance attached to subjects touching on domestic practices in the training of female teachers.<sup>22</sup> Yet progress was slow. It was not until June 1844 that the secretary was in a position to report to the Board that the establishment would be ready to receive teachers from 1 September. His suggestion that Julia Campbell visit various training establishments in London, in the meantime, 'for the purpose of seeing and reporting on the domestic arrangements therein adopted' was authorised.<sup>23</sup> On her return to Dublin, Mrs Campbell and her two daughters took up residence in July 1844 in a furnished apartment, 'with coal and candles', and £150 *per annum*.<sup>24</sup>

### ***3.2 Teachers and the course of training***

In its *Second Report* (1835), the Board published its proposals on the training of those 'who desire to prepare themselves for the office of teaching.' It was intended that five professorships would be established in the training institute. Of these the most important was that concerning the 'art of teaching and conducting schools.' The professor of this branch was to be regarded as head of the institute. Other areas embraced the study of English composition along with geography, history and political economy, mathematics, natural history, and mental philosophy. They further proposed that only those who successfully completed an entrance examination in a course to be decided should be considered for admission. It was thought that a course of two-years' duration would be required, and that during this time candidate teachers would gain experience of teaching in the Central Model School under the direction of the professor of teaching.<sup>25</sup>

It was soon apparent that the Board's ambition exceeded its resources. They were able to offer only four three-month courses to a total of sixty-eight trainees, all of whom were

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 17 Nov. 1842.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 6 June 1844.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 4 July 1844.

<sup>25</sup>C.N.E.I., *Second report* ... 1835, p. 20.

already practising schoolmasters. They accepted that this did little 'towards raising up a body of adequately educated teachers,' and they submitted a plan to the government to address the deficiencies. It was in response to this that the government sanctioned the Board's plans to acquire Tyrone House, around which it was intended to develop the model schools' complex.<sup>26</sup> This allowed the commissioners to proceed, albeit on a reduced scale, with their project for a 'normal' or training establishment that would deal with the problem of 'the incompetence of the teachers that were in general to be found in the schools for the education of the poor.' Instead of the five professorships originally proposed, the Board adjudged that a 'normal establishment' consisting of two departments - one dedicated to 'elementary' instruction, the other to 'scientific' - should suffice. Within the ambit of the latter would fall husbandry and handicraft. It was envisaged that this training establishment would open early in 1838. In addition, the Board expressed a desire to set up a 'School of Industry' close to Dublin where the teachers in training would periodically receive instruction.<sup>27</sup>

The best guide to the content of the course of training that the Board provided is contained in the evidence of Dr McArthur, superintendent of the various training departments, to the parliamentary commission of 1837. Due to its brevity, the course of instruction concentrated principally on familiarising teachers with the contents of the Board's published school books. It appears from his evidence that even such basic instruction may have been only barely within their competence:

We take them through the books published by the Board, and see that they fully understand them, and that they understand all the words, and can point out in the map the different places mentioned; and that they understand the different productions, and where they come from; and they go as far as they can in mathematics and English grammar; there is a Mathematical Master and a Master of English, and they go through with myself all the English books, including the five Reading Books and the Extracts.<sup>28</sup>

McArthur also provided some insight into how teachers for training were selected. Teachers recommended by the inspectors, were called in cohorts of forty to fifty. It appears that those over the age of twenty-five were given preference, but since they never filled the allotted number of places the shortfall was made up from those under the recommended age. These were chosen by McArthur himself.<sup>29</sup> McArthur, in subsequent questioning, stated that the three-month course was too short and that teachers graduated without the authorities being satisfied as to their efficiency.<sup>30</sup> He

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<sup>26</sup>*Third report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland 1836*, (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Third report ... 1836*), p. 2.

<sup>27</sup>*Fourth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland 1837*, (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Fourth report ... 1837*), p. 4.

<sup>28</sup>*New plan of education ... 1837*, p. 306.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 288.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 304.

also observed that the provision made for the board and lodging of the teachers in training of twelve shillings a week was insufficient.<sup>31</sup> The evidence of Carlile, concurred with that of McArthur. He admitted that the Board could not meet its own requirement that there be a trained teacher in each school because of the lack of a training institution. Under these circumstances the best that could be hoped for 'was to bring up masters already elected to schools and to keep them three months in Dublin'. Despite this, the Board remained committed, Carlile maintained, to carry into effect 'the letter as well as the spirit of the Rule, as soon as we should be enabled to do so.'<sup>32</sup> Like McArthur, he too was concerned at the practice of teachers in training boarding out. However, his unease centred on their supervision rather than the quality of accommodation available for twelve shillings per week.<sup>33</sup>

Despite these concerns, the evidence given to the 1837 parliamentary commission indicated that the Board was broadly content with the course of training it offered. T.J. Robertson, like Murray, one of the Board's first four inspectors, when asked whether those teachers trained in the 'Model School' were superior to those who were not replied:

I observed a very great difference. Of course there may be one or two that have been trained that have profited but little by it; but speaking of them generally, I think they were very much improved by it.

When further asked whether national schools under teachers who had received training under the Board 'were decidedly the best', he answered strongly in the affirmative.<sup>34</sup> His colleague Thomas Finn LL.D. was of similar opinion, describing those teachers trained at the Model School as 'decidedly superior to others'.<sup>35</sup> Outside of those directly involved in the operation of the national system favourable comment was also forthcoming. Lady Catherine Osborne of Newtown-Anner, who was patron of a number of schools on the borders of Tipperary and Waterford, believed the teacher in her Kilmacthomas school, who had undergone the course of training, to be 'very superior ... an excellent master'.<sup>36</sup> Another witness, Robert Ingham, M.P. for South Shields, reporting on a visit to a national school in Macroom, observed that the teacher who had benefited from a course of training in Dublin displayed 'a marked distinction in the superior efficiency and energy with which he seemed to conduct the school.' Ingham was further heartened by the comments of the teacher in question who considered that

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 307.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 714.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 676.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 1224.

‘he derived great benefit from having passed through the discipline of the Model School...’. This prompted the witness

to form rather a sanguine expectation that when the Commissioners have the means, which I believe they are now possessed of, of giving generally throughout the schools associated with their system the opportunity to the country masters to come up and avail themselves of the benefits of the Model School, they will have masters of such great ability that eventually they will compete with the Christian Brothers, who are now very able teachers...<sup>37</sup>

Of those in a position to report closely on the working of the training establishment, the opinion of Board member A.R. Blake was less positive. Echoing the concerns voiced by McArthur and Carlile, he accepted that the facilities for training teachers were not yet perfect, and would go no further than to state that the Board’s teachers whom he had the opportunity of examining ‘were of a good description’. The primary obstacle he identified appertained to the difficulty experienced by the Board in obtaining sufficient funding from the government.<sup>38</sup> His evidence as to the indifferent moral character of the teaching body must be treated with caution as it was shown to pre-date the establishment of the national system and was based solely on hearsay.<sup>39</sup>

An indication of the enormity of the task facing the Board and its officers in raising the standard of teaching in its schools, both with regard to the character of the teacher and the content of the curriculum was graphically brought to notice in the report of Dr J.F. Murray - another member of the Board’s initial inspectorial quartet. His powerfully evocative account was based on his inspection of schools on the Leinster circuit during 1832. On the positive side, he was ‘astonished’ to find ‘in very many instances ... the Lancastrian Plan so well understood and acted upon’. The numerous defects that he observed, he ranked in order of importance. Foremost among these he believed to be the ‘want of proper accommodation’. He found schools

in stables, in unroofed and seatless chapels, in the kitchens of the teachers ...

... It is not uncommon to see a house full of children squatted round the walls on the earthen floor, each with a dirty, dogs’-eared, illegible primer in his hand, gaping about and waiting all day for a chance of being taken up for a moment to the master’s knee and sent back again.

Of the ignorance of the generality of teachers, which he ranked second, he wrote:

[It], generally speaking, is another barrier to improvement. To an arrogance and self-conceitdness peculiarly their own, many of the country schoolmasters and mistresses unite an ignorance of everything except reading and writing, with

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 796.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp 71-3.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 54.



occasionally a smattering of mathematics. I found few who knew anything of English grammar; fewer still who were acquainted with geography. However I might lament the limited extent of their information, I could not but regard the wretched judgment displayed in communicating the little they do know.<sup>40</sup>

Murray's comments fail to acknowledge that the limited range of subjects attempted may have addressed the expectations of those availing of the schooling. Nor does it take account of the 'professional' background of many of these untrained masters and mistresses. Many would have made the transformation from self-employed 'pay' school teacher to that of a servant of the National Board. While working in the first type of institution, individual instruction was the norm. The growing popularity of elementary education made this system impractical. Even the efficacy of the 'mutual' system, which was seen as cost effective, was already being called into question. 'Simultaneous' teaching was fast becoming the favoured method. Individual instruction, that he found to be prevalent, was so completely at variance with that being promoted by the Board in its national schools that it could never gain the approbation of one of its officials.<sup>41</sup>

With the opening of the 'normal' establishment in Marlborough Street in 1838 it was felt that significant progress could be made in 'training teachers and educating persons destined to undertake the charge of schools...'. To this end the local managers and school committees - the employers - were reminded of the qualities that a prospective teacher should possess:

He should be a person of Christian sentiment, of calm temper and discretion; he should be imbued with a spirit of peace, of obedience to the law, and loyalty to his Sovereign; he should not only possess the art of communicating knowledge, but be capable of moulding the mind of youth, and of giving the power which education confers a useful direction.

The Board, furthermore, warned that only those teachers who had earned a certificate of competence would, in future, be appointed '*permanently*' to any school. Prospective candidates had to satisfy the commissioners as to their good character - by a certificate from a clergyman of their communion - and their loyalty - by oath or solemn declaration given 'in the presence of the commissioners'. The minimum academic attainment demanded of candidates was a competence in the Board's advanced lesson books. This would be tested by examination prior to entry.

As to the course of training itself, the regulations were both scanty and vague, with the Board confining itself to stating that those in training should attend at the 'training and

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp 1411-3. Murray was dismissed from the Board's service in 1834 for publishing a pamphlet 'Repeal no Remedy' in contravention of its regulations. *M.C.N.E.I.*, 13 Feb. 1834.

<sup>41</sup>It is interesting to contrast Murray's contemporary account of the pedagogical shortcomings of the teachers with the most recent and distinctly benign comments of McManus, *The Irish Hedge school*, pp 101-10.

model schools' in Marlborough Street five days of the week, 'where lectures are delivered on different branches of knowledge, and where they will be practised in the art of teaching'. Saturdays were set aside for practical instruction in agriculture on the farm attached to their residential quarters in Glasnevin, 'where they will see theory reduced to practice'. On the completion of the course, the regulations stated that examinations would be held, based on which each student should receive 'a certificate according to his deserts.'<sup>42</sup>

The clearest proof that the philosophy and practices of the Kildare Place Society with regard to training were adopted by the national system is provided by Robert Sullivan, a 'professor of training', in his description of the Board's central model school for men in 1840. The complex consisted of three schools of different sizes, the largest catering for four hundred pupils, the intermediate for one hundred and thirty, and the smallest, 'intended to exhibit a model for the generality of country schools', about seventy pupils. The two largest, regarded as models for the urban setting, were still reliant on the unpaid monitor for their efficient working. Significantly, a new grade of 'pupil teacher' had been established between monitor and assistant. Unlike the monitor, this intermediate functionary followed a course of training for candidate teachers. With the establishment of district model schools, these would be seen as the mainstay of the Board's training system. Another development of note was the growing appreciation of the worth of the class lesson or 'simultaneous' method of teaching, though official thinking was still steadfastly rooted with regard to economics and rigidity of arrangements and method in the Lancastrian system, with the master in the larger schools an even more remote figure, as O'Sullivan made clear:

The largest, or principal school ... is divided into six divisions ... To each of these divisions a certain number of desks with a determined portion of the floor is assigned, which they are never to leave without permission, or directions from the teacher. Over each of these divisions a paid monitor, or pupil-teacher, is appointed, who is responsible for the cleanliness, good order and proficiency of the children ...

As the pupil teachers cannot possibly instruct all the children themselves the monitorial or mutual instruction method is applied to a certain extent. Each division is sub-divided into classes, according to proficiency of the pupils, and the subjects to be taught; and over each class a monitor is appointed, who instructs it under the guidance of the pupil teacher in charge of the division, and under the general superintendence of the master...

Besides the instruction given to the children by the class monitors and pupils teachers, each class receives at least one lesson in the day from the head, or second master. They, also, in large drafts or divisions, receive simultaneous instruction, once-a-day, in the class-room or gallery, from the pupil teachers or masters.

This, which may be called the mixed system, combines the advantages of the monitorial and simultaneous methods of instruction ... Under the mixed system every pupil is kept constantly at work, and every minute is turned to account.

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<sup>42</sup>C.N.E.I., *Fifth report ... 1838*, p. 6.

The headmaster examines all the divisions in rotation; and makes an entry in his note book of the state and proficiency of each. The second master is expected to do the same, and to communicate to the head master the result of his exam.

The teachers are expected to observe themselves and to impress upon the minds of their pupils the great rule of regularity and order - A time and place for everything, and everything in its proper time and place.

‘Special’ instruction was received by the monitors from the masters each morning before the commencement of class.<sup>43</sup>

The use of monitors was dispensed with in the smallest sized school. The teaching was undertaken by the master and a single pupil teacher through the use of the simultaneous method. While Sullivan acknowledged the advantages of such a system, at a period when it was expected that most schools would have the services of one teacher, it was thought to be applicable only to the lesser units. It is ironic that due to an inability to profit from economies of scale, the smaller school should be first to benefit from an enlightened, less mechanistic method which entailed closer interaction between teacher and pupil. Judging by the account of the visit of Francis B. Head to the Central Model School in the early 1850s, the monitorial system with its many subdivisions and its expectations of instant obedience to commands still held sway.<sup>44</sup>

The opening of the Marlborough Street complex and the provision for residential accommodation greatly enhanced the Board’s training capacity. For the four years from 1834 to 1837 an average of 74 practising teachers underwent a course of training each year, whereas between 1838 and 1843 the corresponding average was almost double at 132.<sup>45</sup> Yet despite this substantial increase in throughput, supply still fell far short of what was required. The inadequacy of the Board’s response is all too obvious when one takes into consideration the rate at which the recognition of schools as national schools grew during the same period. In 1838 there were 1,384 schools with 169,548 children on their rolls. Six years later the number of schools had jumped to 2,912 and the number of pupils to 355,320.<sup>46</sup> The corresponding figure for teachers trained was only 728. At this rate, the Board, at least in the short to medium term, could not entertain any prospect of reducing the differential. If anything the gap in proportionate and absolute terms must widen.

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<sup>43</sup>Robert Sullivan, *An outline of the general regulations and methods of teaching in the male National Model Schools - for the use of teachers in training* (‘Not Published’ - Dublin, 1840), pp 3-5.

<sup>44</sup>Francis B. Head, *A fortnight in Ireland* (London, 1852), pp 25-41 passim.

<sup>45</sup>Powis, vii, 43.

<sup>46</sup>Akenson, *Irish education experiment*, p. 140.

Clearly action was required. The Board's response was threefold. Additional premises were sought to increase its training capacity. An elite group, the 'Special Class', was formed within the training system and a supplementary, though more rudimentary, system of training was introduced for those intending to become teachers.

The acquisition of premises in North Great George's Street allowed the Board to call up an unprecedented one hundred males for training at a time. Owen, the architect, was also asked to investigate the possibility of erecting a teacher residence at the rear of the Model School complex to obviate the need to board male teachers at Glasnevin.<sup>47</sup> The Board did not envisage all teachers taking the same course. The training course, now lengthened to five months, was undertaken by two drafts of teachers annually. It was also proposed that a longer course of one or two years be offered. Those who were not in a position to be absent from their schools for the entire course, along with those teachers whom it was felt would not benefit from the more advanced aspects of the course, would attend for a shorter period. When this matter was first discussed by the Board it was of the view that those on the longer course would form the 'Special Class', chosen by the Professors, of six males and six females drawn from the Marlborough Street Model Schools. Early in 1846 this regulation was set aside and replaced by one which stated that those comprising the 'Special Class' were to consist 'exclusively of teachers who have been previously in charge of national schools'. They would receive twelve months' training and would be employed as substitute teachers in country schools where the incumbent had been called to training.<sup>48</sup> It is not clear that the scheme operated thus in practice. The *Minutes* indicate that there was further tinkering with the plan later that year. In October, the Professors of the Training Department recommended that any vacancies 'which may hereafter occur' should be filled by trained teachers and by paid monitors recommended by the Superintendents.<sup>49</sup> A maximum period of two years was allowed for the aggregate time spent in training by a member of the 'Special Class'.<sup>50</sup> Before coming fully into operation this 'Special Class' was increased in number to thirty - again with equal gender representation.<sup>51</sup>

Significantly, the suggestion of sanctioning the employment of paid monitors in 'some of the best national schools' was considered by the Board at its 21 March 1844 meeting.<sup>51</sup> This scheme, which underwent significant enlargement and refinement over time, offered a parallel system of training to the more specialised course soon to be on

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<sup>47</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 6, 13, 27 June, 4 July, 8 Aug. 1844.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 Mar., 6 June, 19 Dec. 1844, 2 Jan. 1845.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 Oct. 1846.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 Oct. 1846.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 Mar. 1844.

offer in the Board's district model schools. It rapidly became the most popular means of entry into the profession for candidate teachers.

With the extension of training to females, the establishment of the 'Special Class' and the acquisition of additional accommodation for male teachers, the number answering the request to attend training increased considerably. Before 1843 no more than 154 were called to training in any one year. By 1844 this had climbed to 217, and for the remainder of the decade it averaged 257, with females accounting for approximately one-third of the intake. Of the 1,525, of both genders, trained at the Central Establishment before 1846, the year in which the Board announced its decision to establish a system of regional model schools, 82 per cent were Roman Catholic, while 65 per cent of the remainder, numbering 282, were Presbyterian.<sup>52</sup> No clearer proof can be adduced to show that at this juncture the Board had no grounds for misgivings with regard to the support its system of training commanded amongst Roman Catholic school patrons. If anything their attitude could be described as well-disposed. As early as December 1831, Bishop James Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin had expressed no reservations as to the advantages arising from the employment of teachers who had undergone a course of training at a model school. He saw the newly-certificated teachers playing a crucial role in the suppression of hedge-schools.<sup>53</sup> Doyle had outwardly favoured the establishment of a model school in Dublin in 1827, though his motive in doing this, according to McGrath, may have been suspect.<sup>54</sup> The previous year, in the hierarchy's response to the 1826 Education Report, is found the bishops' first reference to the desirability of provincial male and female model schools.<sup>55</sup> It is clear also from the record of the select meeting of prelates, held in Dublin in February 1840, under the chairmanship of Dr Crolly, Archbishop of Armagh that such an initiative on the part of the government commanded wide support. It was agreed at this meeting that a number of proposals 'for the purpose of receiving the unanimous co-operation of the Roman Catholic prelates in diffusing the advantages of National education' would be submitted to the lord lieutenant. The committee charged with the task of formulating these proposals was composed of six prelates, three of whom were favourable to the national system, and three, including Archbishop John MacHale, who were opposed. The sixth, and final, motion read

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<sup>52</sup>Powis, vii, 43. Of the 1525 trained, 60 belonged to the Established Church, 182 were Presbyterian, 17 'Other' Protestants, 23 were Protestants whose denominations had not been recorded. Roman Catholics numbered 1243.

<sup>53</sup>*Sixth report of the commissioners of national education...1839* (henceforth *Sixth report ... 1839*), pp 8-9. Reprints circular in full.

<sup>54</sup>Thomas McGrath, *Politics and interdenominational relations and education in the public ministry of Bishop James Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin, 1786-1834* (Dublin, 1999), pp 208-9. The author suggests that Doyle really favoured the establishment of a University for Catholics, but in light of growing tension over 'Emancipation' it was not appropriate to state so publicly.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, p.197.

That it would be very desirable to have a model school in each of the four provinces, when the funds of the National Board of Education might be found sufficient for that purpose, as such an establishment would inspire the inhabitants of the province with greater confidence in the system of National education.

The bishops' sanction for this proposal was obviously contingent on its demands being met. This was particularly so with respect to the fourth stipulation that two lay Roman Catholics selected by the lord lieutenant from each of the four ecclesiastical provinces, along with one of their own body selected by themselves, be appointed members of the Board 'for the satisfaction of the Roman Catholics, and for the greater security of their religion.' Nothing was conceded. While the lord lieutenant did not directly address the proposals on provincial model schools, he concluded by stating that

... after the best consideration that I can give to the subject, I am bound distinctly to state to you that no changes such as you desire can, in my opinion, be made with advantage to the public, either in the constitution of that Board who have hitherto worked so harmoniously together, or in the general regulations under which they have acted...<sup>56</sup>

Apart from these intermittent representations from the Roman Catholic hierarchy, the topic of model schools provoked little by way of interest among the laity. It is worth noting though that the renowned educationalist Maria Edgeworth proposed, through Commissioner A.R. Blake, that the Board should take the Edgeworthstown Schools into connection. The commissioners were agreeable and, if acceptable to the lord lieutenant, proposed to convert them into model schools 'upon some future occasion'. He acknowledged the suggestion but, since nothing was done to put it into effect, one can only assume that his reply was in the negative.<sup>57</sup> Almost a decade later, a proposal to establish a district model school in Larne was declined by the Board due to lack of funds.<sup>58</sup>

### ***3.3 District Model Schools***

The arrangements outlined above for the training of teachers were never seen as comprehensive. From its earliest days the Board clearly recognised the need for a system of training for 'candidate' teachers. This it concluded could best be achieved through the establishment of a number of model schools dispersed throughout the country. While the *Powis Report* inclined to the view that the commissioners' decision to proceed with a scheme of such schools in 1844 was inspired by opportunism,<sup>59</sup> a close examination of the evidence suggests that these schools were viewed as an indispensable necessity from virtually the very beginning. Indeed, the Board developed a scheme for district

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<sup>56</sup>*Powis*, i, pt. I, 123-4.

<sup>57</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 28 Nov. 1833; 9 Jan. 1834.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 20 Aug. 1840.

<sup>59</sup>*Powis*, i, pt. II, 732.

model schools as early as 1835, and while this was not, as the Powis Commission noted, returned to until 1844, it must be remembered that the Board operated subject to severe financial constraints throughout the late 1830s and early 1840s. Throughout 1837, due to lack of funds, one grant only was made towards the building of a school house. Reference has already been made to Board attempts at economy in 1838. Again, in 1842 and 1843, the commissioners called for an increase in its annual grant to allow for the building of more schools.<sup>60</sup> This grant had remained static at £50,000 since 1837, while during the same period there was a more than one hundred percent increase in the number of schools connected.<sup>61</sup> Indeed while the tone of the *Powis Report* is generally unsympathetic to the national system, the section bearing on model schools and the Central Training Institute is distinctly hostile. This was compiled by Rev. B.M. Cowie and S.M. Stokes, both Inspectors of Schools under the English denominational system. Their preference for the denominational model and prejudice against all efforts at 'united' education reflected their attitude. Moreover, their written report was not subject to the same critical evaluation by the Royal Commissioners as the oral evidence of numerous witnesses. It fell to Dr David Wilson, one of three of the fourteen Royal Commissioners who refused to sign the *Report*, to rebut many of the uncontested claims of Cowie and Stokes.<sup>62</sup> It was Hurt's contention that Cowie was one of those members of the Anglican Church who regarded the English educational system as 'a state-subsidised part of the ecclesiastical organization'.<sup>63</sup> This was a sentiment with which the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Ireland at the period would have heartily concurred.

In addressing a query by the lord lieutenant in its 1835 *Report* as to 'what extension can be given to the new system of Education, consistent with the demand for instruction, and with due regard to the preparation necessary for training schoolmasters...', the commissioners were in no doubt that 'in addition to the general training institution, thirty-two district Model Schools should be established, being a number equal to that of the counties of Ireland...'.<sup>64</sup> These schools should, they advised, be staffed by teachers of superior attainments, with remuneration reflecting their pre-eminence. Here it was intended that preparatory training would be given to each candidate teacher.

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<sup>60</sup>C.N.E.I., *Fourth report ... 1837*, p. 3; *Ninth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland, 1842* (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Ninth report ... 1842*), p. 3; *Tenth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland, 1843* (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Tenth report ... 1843*), p. 3.

<sup>61</sup>Akenson, *Irish education experiment*, pp 136, 140.

<sup>62</sup>*Powis*, i, pt. I, App. No. 3. 570-80.

<sup>63</sup>John Hurt, *Education in evolution - church, state, society and popular education 1800-1870* (London, 1971), p. 120.

<sup>64</sup>C.N.E.I., *Second report ... 1835*, p. 6.

The invitation from the lord lieutenant to indicate 'what amount of funds may be annually expended beneficially by the State' on the development of the system provided the Board with the opportunity to set out in considerable detail the system's requirements. It was reckoned that 5,000 national schools were required to supply the needs of the population of school-going age. This they numbered at 1,140,000, or one-seventh of the population. A nine-year time scale was proposed. Detailed annual breakdowns were given. The Board envisaged thirty-two planned model schools being founded within the first two years at a cost of £24,000, while the bulk of the 5,000 ordinary schools would be built by the sixth year of the plan. It was reckoned that each of these could be constructed at a cost to the Board of £180.<sup>65</sup> It was estimated that when the project was completed the annual maintenance cost would not exceed £200,000. In light of the fact that for the following eight years the annual grant did not exceed £50,000 and that by 1849 it stood at just £120,000, it appears that this nine year plan was never taken seriously by the administration.<sup>66</sup>

Undaunted by the lack of a positive response, the commissioners revisited the issue of a network of model schools in 1837 and proposed to divide the country into twenty-five school districts, each under a superintendent and each with a model school. It would also be the residence of the superintendent. Each school was to consist of two departments - 'one for elementary teaching, the other for scientific, and for the instruction in manual occupations'. With this latter element in mind each school was to have a work-room and model farm of about forty acres attached. It was believed that the total cost involved would not exceed £15,000. By allowing the schoolmaster the use of the land at a certain rent on condition that the institute be properly managed, it was expected that there would be no maintenance costs. School fees to a maximum of 1s. 6d. per quarter were proposed and were to be levied on each child. At the elementary level they were to be at the 6d. minimum. These would provide a supplemental income for the master, his assistant, 'and the most advanced of the monitors whom he may employ'. Boarding for students was also considered desirable, some paying, others who were successful at a special examination to be maintained free of charge. To some extent these proposals were even more ambitious than those of two years earlier. Over time a level of secondary scientific education, including instruction in manual occupations was to be grafted onto the national system. Again, a portion of land was seen as 'an indispensable adjunct' to each rural secondary school. Teachers at primary level could aspire to promotion.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid., pp 6-7.

<sup>66</sup>Figures from Akenson, *Irish education experiment*, p.136.

<sup>67</sup>C.N.E.I., *Fourth report ... 1837*, p. 5.



Regrettably, because the Board's *Minutes* for much of the late 1830s do not survive, it is not possible to know with certainty the thinking of the commissioners. From what can be pieced together it is clear that moves were afoot to secure sanction for a network of rural model schools, each with a farm attached. The resident commissioner, Carlile and fellow commissioners Blake and Sadlier were to the fore in the attempt to gain the backing of Lord Morpeth, the chief secretary of Ireland, for the proposals.<sup>68</sup>

Tantalisingly, the break in the *Minutes* coincides with the Board's decision in February 1837 to defer for the present further consideration for the establishment of county model schools.<sup>69</sup>

The *Reports* of the early 1840s cast no further light on the matter of model schools - due in all likelihood to the lack of government funding. Despite the pleadings of the Board, increased funding was not made available until 1844 when an additional £22,000 was sanctioned.<sup>70</sup> In the interim the *Minutes* record only one reference to model schools. In January, 1843 the secretary brought to the notice of the Board 'the advantages that might be derived from a system of provincial training of National Teachers' in addition to that provided at Dublin. Mindful of their straitened financial position, the commissioners expressed their general approval of the suggestion but reserved it 'for future consideration'.<sup>71</sup> It is worthy of note that this suggestion, whether intentional or otherwise, reflected the thinking of the Roman Catholic hierarchy at the time since it mirrored the bishops' 1840 proposal referred to above.

The pleas of the commissioners were finally heeded in 1843 and 'they learned with great satisfaction' that the grant was to be considerably augmented. This allowed them to unveil their plans for the employment of paid monitors.<sup>72</sup> The receipt of the enlarged grant in 1844 enabled the Board to appoint additional superintendents, to extend the training establishment - both with regard to capacity and the introduction of a longer course of training for a select number - and to increase the number of schools recognised as national schools.<sup>73</sup> Not surprisingly, given the Board's belief in the necessity for and efficacy of district model schools, this project was also resurrected. However, the Board was of the opinion that its lack of legal status as a body might hamper it in its efforts. Also, it was aware that the Commissioners of Education in Ireland - in charge of schools of public and private foundation - were incorporated and that the conferral of similar

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<sup>68</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 17 Dec. 1835, 7 Jan., 29 Sept., 27 Oct., 3 and 24 Nov. 1836; 5 and 12 Jan. 1837.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 Feb. 1837.

<sup>70</sup> Akenson, *Irish education experiment*, p. 136.

<sup>71</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 19 Jan. 1843.

<sup>72</sup> *C.N.E.I.*, *Tenth report ... 1843*, p. 4.

<sup>73</sup> *Eleventh report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland, 1844* (henceforth *C.N.E.I.*, *Eleventh report ... 1844*), p. 3.

privileges on the National Board of Education had support in parliament.<sup>74</sup> Moves had already begun in late 1844 to achieve this objective. On 21 November a draft letter on the subject was approved and sent to the lord lieutenant. A week later the Board was informed that the proposal had the approval of the Irish administration, and that the matter was being forwarded to London for consideration.<sup>75</sup> The alacrity with which Dublin Castle gave its approval suggests that the Board's initiative was a collusive one. While the official reply from London was not received for almost a year, the signals emanating were positive. So much so that in August 1845, on the proposition of A.R. Blake, the Board confidently ordered its superintendents to look out for sites suitable for the erection of thirty-two district model schools. At its next meeting it was resolved to appropriate £10,000 from the 1845/6 estimate to a reserve fund, half of which was to go towards the erection of national school houses that were to be vested in the commissioners and under their exclusive control, and the remaining £5,000 to be made available for the erection of district model schools. On 21 August the commissioners were informed that the letter of incorporation of the Board had been signed by Queen Victoria.<sup>76</sup> By the end of the following month the first application - that by the inhabitants of Newry - for a district model school had already been received.<sup>77</sup>

The Board lost no time in unveiling its ambitious plans. At the end of 1845 it reported that its superintendents had already identified sites for six district model schools.<sup>78</sup> In 1846, the superintendents, 'for their own information and that of the patrons of the several schools within their districts', were given the details of the general plan on which thirty-two such schools would be conducted.<sup>79</sup> Considering the controversy which was to arise over alleged breaches by the Board of its own regulations regarding the establishment of its district model schools it is useful to quote from this circular at length:

1. That of the thirty-two District Model Schools a certain number should be established in the chief towns of Ireland; the remainder in smaller towns and villages throughout the country.

2. That each Model School, established in large towns, should consist of an infant, male, and a female school; and that each of these schools should be capable of containing one hundred children. That a small play-ground would be annexed to each school; the whole school premises should be enclosed with a wall, and contain half an acre, at the least.

3. That in the Model Schools, established in the smaller country towns, the same course should be followed, with this difference, that in the place of the infant school an agricultural school should be established.

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 272.

<sup>75</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 21, 28 Nov. 1844.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 1, 7, 21 Aug. 1845.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 25 Sept. 1845.

<sup>78</sup>*C.N.E.I., Twelfth report ... 1845*, p. 307.

<sup>79</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 1 Aug. 1845. At this meeting Commissioner A.R. Blake proposed that there be a model school in each of the thirty-two districts.

4. That in each District Model School a residence for the master, and a dormitory to accommodate three Candidate Teachers should be attached to the male school. That a residence should be supplied to the mistress of the female school, in the neighbourhood of the school, and that one female Candidate Teacher should be placed under her care.

5. That the Candidate Teachers should be Boarded and lodged at the expense of the Commissioners. The Course of training in the District Model School to last for six months; so that in each district six male and two female teachers should be annually trained - in all 256.

6. That the Candidate Teachers should be selected, after public examination by the Superintendents, from among the paid Monitors and other meritorious pupils of National Schools within the district; and that such of the Candidate Teachers as should pass with credit through the half-year course of training in the District Model School, should be recommended by the Superintendent to those patrons of schools who apply for teachers.

7. That after the Candidate Teacher should have passed through the District Model School, should have received the Superintendent's certificate, and served in a National School for two years, he should be summoned to complete his education at the National Model School in Dublin: but that previous to his admission he should be examined by the Professors in a course of study which should be prescribed for all Candidate Teachers as soon as they had received their certificates at the District Model Schools; and that he should be rejected, unless found thoroughly prepared in this prescribed course.

8. That from all the National Schools in the neighbourhood of each District Model School, a certain number of the most deserving pupils should be annually selected, after public examination, by the Superintendent, and be admitted as free Scholars into the District Model School, to act as Monitors therein, and to receive for their services small weekly payments...<sup>80</sup>

This circular was based on the fourteen-point plan discussed by the Board at its 7 May meeting. The additional points, not published in the *Report* but included in the circular, make it clear that it was intended to locate one model school in each school district. These schools would be vested solely in the commissioners with their superintendents acting as managers, even when the locality contributed towards the cost of erection. There was no provision for local involvement in management, either secular or lay. Significantly, the lord lieutenant was informed that the cost of each building was capped at £800 - a figure, as we shall see, that was in every case greatly exceeded. The thirteenth point also makes it clear that the commissioners at this stage envisaged the national system providing a level of secondary and technical education. Provision was to be made at each district model school for the addition, at some future stage, of a 'middle class school house, and an industrial department' should the commissioners deem it appropriate. And, although not proceeded with until the mid-1850s, the Board also planned to build, at its own expense, a number of ordinary national schools in areas too poor to provide their own. It was envisaged that in these schools, under the patronage of the commissioners and the management of the district superintendent, 'candidate teachers who shall have passed through the district model schools and young persons educated in the "Special Class" in Dublin' would teach for two years, after which time

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<sup>80</sup> C.N.E.I., *Thirteenth report ... 1846*, p. 9.

they would be fit 'to undertake more important schools.'<sup>81</sup> When established during the following decade, these schools were titled 'minor model schools.'

At the core of the Board's plan, as outlined in the circular to the superintendents, was a very clear object 'which district model National schools were originally designed to meet'. As summarised in the Powis Report:

That object was to train probationary teachers for service in ordinary schools under the Board, with the intent that after a period of trial they should be summoned to the central institution in Dublin, and there complete their course of training.<sup>82</sup>

Following the approval of the above plan at a special Board meeting held on 7 May, it was submitted to the lord lieutenant 'for his consideration and sanction'. It was made clear also that the Board wished to appropriate from the 1845 parliamentary grant a sum sufficient for the erection of the six district model schools as a first step.<sup>83</sup> Confident that permission would be forthcoming<sup>84</sup> Jacob Owen, was directed to prepare plans 'without delay'. At last the Board could claim, after the effort of a decade and more, that the missing piece 'in the general machinery of our system' was now about to be put in place.<sup>85</sup>

Commissioner J. R. Corballis and Resident Commissioner Alexander Macdonnell, were requested 'to report upon the sites which they consider most eligible ... amongst the various offers that have been made to the commissioners.'<sup>86</sup> Corballis and Macdonnell were members of the sub-committee charged with the task of vetting applications. They were later joined by Rev. Dr Pooley Shulldham Henry, thereby giving the three principal denominations equal representation. It is true, as claimed in the *Powis Report*, that the Board did not formulate a set of criteria against which various applications could be judged. However, Cowie and Stokes, whose job it was to report on the individual model schools to the Powis Inquiry, either failed to uncover or chose not to acknowledge the existence of a sub-committee charged with assessing each application.<sup>87</sup>

Financial constraints, and later opposition from the Roman Catholic hierarchy, ensured that the project proceeded more slowly than anticipated, and never achieved the

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<sup>81</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 7 May 1846. The full circular is reproduced in *Powis*, i, pt. II, 733.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 733.

<sup>83</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 7 Aug. 1845. The Board resolved that £10,000 be included in the estimates for 1845-6 towards district model schools and national schools vested in the commissioners - £5,000 for each project.

<sup>84</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 14 May 1846. The Board is notified of the lord lieutenant's approval. It had, on the suggestion of Archbishop Whately, previously ascertained the views of the government (*M.C.N.E.I.*, 16 Apr. 1846).

<sup>85</sup> *C.N.E.I.*, *Thirteenth report ... 1846*, p 10.

<sup>86</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 7 May 1846.

<sup>87</sup> *Powis*, i, pt. I, p. 433.

intended geographical spread. As a result, between 1849 and 1867 just nineteen model schools were opened. To this may be added a further seven minor model schools. Three others, given the nomenclature 'Metropolitan' model schools - the West Dublin and Inchicore Model Schools and the Central Model School in Marlborough Street, do not fit neatly in either category. In retrospect the network was heavily skewed towards Ulster, and fell short of the intended number of district model schools. All twenty-nine, irrespective of gradation or location, were seen as having an important function in the training of candidate teachers, and were perceived as an indispensable complement to the system of *training for practising teachers already in place* in the Board's Central Training Establishment in Dublin.



## Administrative Arrangements

The Commissioners of National Education pressed ahead with their detailed plans for the implementation of a nation-wide network of model schools against a background of growing political controversy and social convulsion. Their primary motivation was the acknowledged deficiency in the area of teacher training both with regard to sufficiency of supply and extent of professional preparation. Despite notable achievements during the 'daring first decade',<sup>1</sup> the Board's failure to implement a training plan capable of making any inroad into the preponderance of untrained teachers within the system threatened to call into question its resolve. In responding to this challenge, the Board was obliged to expand its administrative structure. Its experience, heretofore, in the area of school building had been confined to the vetting of applications for grants towards the cost of erection, assistance towards equipping with both furniture and requisites, and the sanctioning of grants towards salary. Now it would have to adopt a more pro-active approach. Suitable sites had to be identified and acquired. Legal difficulties had to be resolved. Designs had to be costed and agreed on. Tenders had to be assessed and provision made for supervision of the work. Arrangements had to be adopted on which the individual model schools would be run. A standardised procedure for appointments to staff had to be devised, as indeed did a procedure for enrolment. In effect, the Board would have to put in place a centralised management structure, taking to itself many of the functions that were carried out by patrons in its locally managed schools. The ultimate success of this venture depended not so much on the efficiency of the machinery put in place, but on the extent to which it won and maintained the support of concerned religious interests.

### **4.1 External Factors**

From its inception, the National Board of Education had to cope with the 'religious difficulty', with little genuine support for the principle of 'united' education. Roman Catholic attitude verged on the opportunistic. The principal Protestant denominations had reservations. Changes in regulations regarding non-vested schools in 1840 were necessary to win over Presbyterians,<sup>2</sup> while the Established Church, never at ease with the principle, further distanced itself from the system with the formation of the Church

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<sup>1</sup>For the early achievements of the Board of National Education see John Coolahan, 'The daring first decade of the Board of National Education, 1831-1841', *The Irish Journal of Education*, xvii, no. 1, (1983), pp 35-54.

<sup>2</sup>The dealings of the Presbyterian Church with the Board of National Education are extensively dealt with in Akenson, *Irish education experiment*, chapter 5. For a more comprehensive account of the Presbyterian Church and Education see McIvor's *Popular education in the Irish Presbyterian Church*.

Education Society in 1839.<sup>3</sup> Overall, Akenson argues that the efforts of both the Presbyterian and Established churches were complementary. The 'shrewdness' of the former 'producing curricular denominationalism', while the 'aloofness of the latter had the effect, particularly in the south of Ireland, of handing over the management of the national schools to the Roman Catholic clergy'.<sup>4</sup>

While the Synod of Thurles in 1850 was to mark the beginning of a new and difficult phase in the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and both the government and the other religious denominations, this was not apparent to those close to the Board or the government in the mid-1840s. Archbishops Whately and Murray enjoyed a good working relationship in overseeing the running of the national system, despite the sectarian nature of the support it commanded. Government concern focused on thwarting demands for Repeal. Government initiatives aimed at a *rapprochement* with the Roman Catholic majority. Though inaugurated with the purpose of dislodging moderates from the ranks of the 'Repealers', they met with a mixed response and were ultimately to prove counter-productive. Neither the reformed Charitable Bequests Board nor the Queen's Colleges gained majority support among the Roman Catholic hierarchy.<sup>5</sup> A third initiative - a three-fold increase in the Maynooth endowment - was gladly, if not graciously, accepted. The extent, though, to which it raised passions in England, where anti-Catholic feeling was strong, was little appreciated in Ireland.<sup>6</sup> Historically, any effort to endow a religion perceived as being hostile to the state encountered strenuous constitutional opposition and inflamed popular feeling. While in England there was security in numbers, in Ireland the Established Church enjoyed a degree of prestige and power in inverse proportion to its numbers. It had for long been cosseted by the institutions of state from the claims of the majority. However, the modest demands of Roman Catholics, backed by a small but significant group of liberal Protestants, could not be denied for ever. Developments during the 1830s following on Catholic Emancipation, combined with the government initiatives of the 1840s, indicated that both Tory and Whig administrations wished to soothe the concerns of moderate Roman Catholics and to encourage the adoption of constitutional means to achieve redress. While many Protestants could take courage from their evangelical renewal throughout the period, it served only to confirm them in their suspicion of Catholicism and did nothing to bolster their appeal in the community at large.

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<sup>3</sup>Akenson, *Irish education experiment*, pp 197-201.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 202.

<sup>5</sup>For the Charitable Bequests Act see Donal A. Kerr, *Peel, priests and politics* (Oxford, 1982), pp 110-92; and for the Colleges Act see Donal A. Kerr, *A nation of beggars? priests, people and politics in Famine Ireland 1846-1852*, (Oxford, 1994), pp 215-32.

<sup>6</sup>On the subject of anti-Catholic feeling in England see E.R. Norman, *Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England*, (London, 1968), pp 13-124; John Wolfe, *God and Great Britain*, (London, 1994), *passim*.



Increasingly, the Roman Catholic demands were perceived as insatiable, with each concession only encouraging cries of 'more'. It is difficult to deny that Roman Catholics, albeit increasingly under clerical influence, had a better grasp of the *realpolitik*. The hegemony of the Established Church in many spheres of Irish social life was coming to an end. Tactically, it did not make sense for the opposing protagonists to prop up this fading power through support for a principle they regarded as invidious. It was against this challenging background that the Commissioners of National Education set about establishing their network of model schools and the administrative machinery that would ensure its effective operation.

While the Great Famine, its period coinciding exactly with the first and most frenetic phase of model school erection, did not in any consequential way influence the Board's plans, its effects, in certain parts of the country, vividly highlighted the precarious existence of many teachers. It pointed up how even difficulties, generally accepted as providential in nature, could adversely affect the Board's attempt to establish a professional teaching body. By 1846 it was acknowledged by the Board that the plight of teachers was such that a supplemental payment should be made to 'our poorer teachers'. The payment of a gratuity totalling £3,000 from the fund reserved for the proposed model schools was sanctioned by the lord lieutenant, the Earl of Bessborough. This was divided among some 2,347 teachers - more than half those recognised by the Board - who received between £6 and £12. Undoubtedly welcomed by the recipients, it was readily admitted by the Board that the sum offered was 'not sufficient to counterbalance the increased price of the necessities of life'.<sup>7</sup> In 1848, efforts were made by the British Relief Association to ameliorate the condition of the peasantry through the use of the country's national school network for the distribution of food. This caused an increase in school attendance<sup>8</sup> that in itself posed problems for the operation of the national system. According to J.W. Kavanagh, the head inspector responsible for much of the south and part of the west of the country - the districts hardest hit, 'the benevolent managers of that charity have unconsciously injured the cause of education'. Under a scheme that set a premium on mere physical attendance and, in Kavanagh's mind, encouraged fraud, the primary aim of the school - education - was entirely forgotten. The extra duties that the distribution of food imposed upon teachers also had the effect of denying them the time they might devote to their own studies with a view to advancing in classification. The long term social effects, according to Kavanagh, were considerably more deleterious:

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<sup>7</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirteenth report ... 1846*, p. 5; *M.C.N.E.I.*, 10 Dec. 1846.

<sup>8</sup>Attendance figures for 1848 increased by 104,837 - *Fifteenth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1848*, [1066], H.C. 1849, xxiii (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Fifteenth report ... 1848*), p. 3.

The influx of such vast numbers, half-naked, filthy, and in many cases from fever-houses, drove the pupils who had been regular in their attendance from the school. This substituted a clamorous mob for an orderly school, deprived the teacher of his fees, exposed him to disease, degraded him to the office of a workhouse porter, and when the relief ceased, left him the empty walls of a school-house, the regular pupils having gone to other schools.<sup>9</sup>

Kavanagh's concern for the material welfare of the teachers was genuinely felt. Emoluments from all sources barely amounted, on average, to £20 yearly. In less than ten per cent of cases was there a local stipend from landlord, patron or committee, while school fees were generally under £4. Of the 430 teachers surveyed, about half were married. Of those unmarried, he believed 'a very large portion have parents or relatives wholly or partially dependent upon them for support'. Pressing home his point, he suggested that

the commissioners can scarcely conceive the extreme privation and acute suffering through which the teachers have passed since the failure of the potato crop ... I regret to have to state, that some of the teachers were necessitated to accept outdoor relief from the Union; many died from fever caught in their schools; several of the unmarried have emigrated to America; and at this moment there are many schools vacant, no teacher being found willing to undertake the charge.<sup>10</sup>

Kavanagh's assessment of the impact of the Famine on the national school system was atypical. If anything the view in Marlborough Street was that the effects of the Famine would have been more keenly felt but for the Board's efforts. It was a matter of regret that the number of national schools with farms attached was not adequate to the wants of the country, but if it had been there was no doubt in the Board's mind that, through a greater acquaintance with 'an improved system of agriculture', many of the Famine difficulties could have been avoided.<sup>11</sup> The Board attributed the reduced level of absenteeism due to illness at its Central Model School in Marlborough Street

to the sanitary arrangements we have adopted in providing well-ventilated school-rooms and spacious play-grounds, as well as to the strict attention paid to personal cleanliness, and to the opportunities afforded, at convenient times, for cheerful recreation.<sup>12</sup>

After time for reflection, the opinion of the Board as to its redeeming role during that calamitous period remained undimmed. The resident commissioner, Alexander Macdonnell, ventured to the Lords' Inquiry in 1854 that without the blessings of education under the national system 'the vast numbers, who ... escaped from the country by emigration, would in all probability have perished of hunger'. The knowledge

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., App. p. 211.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., App. p. 211.

<sup>11</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirteenth report ... 1846*, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup>*Fourteenth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1847*, [1981], H.C. 1847-8, xxix (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Fourteenth report ... 1847*), p. 7.

acquired had enabled them 'to inquire with regard to the best means of escaping from Ireland', and by availing of those means they had escaped death.<sup>13</sup>

The attitude of the Board to the Famine was not one of indifference rather of superiority. This was symptomatic of its perception of itself as in the vanguard of the forces for change. This blinded it to the changes taking place in the religious and political spheres, and, more importantly, to the realignments both within and between these sources of power. The establishment of the model school network was seen as the ultimate part of the national system's 'general machinery'. This mechanistic approach dominated the early thinking of the Board with respect to its model schools. Co-operation was sought at local level, but no effort was made to reach a general accommodation, or even to assess the prospects of such. The belief was that the beneficial results of the initiative would in time win over opponents, with the result that most energy and effort was devoted to the implementation of a set of practical procedures to be followed in identifying suitable locations, in establishing individual schools, and in developing an efficient administrative structure. The one factor which did impinge on the commissioners' plans almost from the start was the inadequacy of funding. This, combined with dramatic overruns in costs, forced the Board to set about the task piecemeal and robbed it of the element of surprise. By the time work started on the construction of Enniskillen District Model School in the mid-1860s it was accepted that no further expansion of the network would take place. The interim period was one of dramatically changing fortunes for the national system in general, and, at the level of the local model school, of dramatic shifts in attitude. A growing realisation that the national system did not and could never operate *in vacuo* dictated that the Board's approach to the establishment of, and the operational arrangements for its model schools would have to take account of local feelings.

#### **4.2 Site Selection: The Early Model Schools, 1846-49**

On 14 May 1846, following the receipt of recommendations from the superintendents as to the eligibility of certain sites for the erection of district model schools, the sub-committee charged with overseeing this matter reported favourably on those of Newry, Drogheda, Coleraine, Trim and Dunmanway. It was ordered that the necessary information be obtained respecting term and title to the five sites.<sup>14</sup> A decision by the Board in July 1846 to have all land attached to the model schools, in addition to the school premises, vested in the commissioners in their corporate capacity also suggests that the matter of model farms was under consideration.<sup>15</sup> In September of the same

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<sup>13</sup> *Report from the select committee of the house of lords appointed to inquire into the practical working of the system of national education in Ireland, 1854* (henceforth *Lords' inquiry ... 1854*), p. 285.

<sup>14</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 14 May 1846.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 July 1846.

year a further expansion into the area of school building and management was contemplated. The proposal that a 'limited' number of ordinary national schools should be erected at the sole expense of the Board and under its exclusive management 'in localities where the required local contribution cannot be raised for such purposes' was approved at a 'Special Board Meeting', with the rider that 'poor localities be selected where trade manufacturers, mining, maritime and other industrial occupations are carried on'.<sup>16</sup> While a shortage of funding was the stated reason a number of applications were either delayed or denied, even when money was available, it did not always a guarantee that matters could be dealt with expeditiously. By the end of 1846 the Board admitted that because of its inability to secure suitable sites for the sanctioned district model schools 'only a small portion of the money which had been allocated ... can be required during the ensuing year'. As a result, the lord lieutenant's sanction was sought for an arrangement whereby the funding would be allowed to 'roll-over' to 1847.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the difficulties encountered in obtaining sites, the mood of the Board was still upbeat. In mid-1847 the district inspectors of those districts from which 'suitable applications' had not been received for district and agricultural model schools were directed to identify eligible sites and to report thereon to Tyrone House.<sup>18</sup> Some progress was made. The model school sub-committee in September 1847 vetted tenders and made recommendations to the Board. By the end of that year, six district model schools - Coleraine, Ballymena, Newry, Bailieborough, Clonmel and Dunmanway - were in the process of construction. In retrospect this would be viewed as the halcyon days. There were already signs that this rate of progress could not be maintained. In the previous year, the commissioners gave the first clear warning that their aspiration to establish one model school in each inspectorial district would cost much more than originally thought. 'We find', they reported, 'that the expense will be so considerable, that, unless Parliament provide us with sufficient funds for the purpose, we must proceed in our undertaking by slow degrees.'<sup>19</sup> Unheeded by government, the Board felt obliged in its *Report* for 1847 to restate its belief of the indispensability of a nation-wide network of Model Schools in affording 'unity and full efficiency to the National System'. In pleading for extra funding the Board stated that there was sufficient money to erect only those already sanctioned. With the addition of Trim to the list the number then stood at seven. The *Report* proceeded to advise that

it will, therefore, depend upon the future liberality of Parliament, whether we shall be enabled to establish one of these schools in each district, in accordance with our original

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<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 10, 18 Sept. 1846.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 10 Dec. 1846.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 24 June 1847.

<sup>19</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirteenth report ... 1846*, p.9.

plan. The cost of their building and subsequent maintenance will necessarily be very considerable.

This section of the *Report* concluded with the information that model farms would be attached to the Dunmanway, Bailieborough and Trim schools.<sup>20</sup>

There was no plea for additional funding in the 1848 *Report*. In light of J.W. Kavanagh's account of the strain which famine was putting on the national system and its teachers in parts of the south and west, it is tempting to think that such a call would be seen as inappropriate and indelicate. The reason, though, had probably more to do with 'pressure upon the Treasury for money'. At least this was the reason given by under-secretary Sir T.N. Redington in asking that the estimates for 1848-9 be 'revised and reduced in amount as far as may be consistent with the carrying on of the establishment in an efficient manner'. In response, on the recommendation of the Finance Committee, 'certain items [were postponed] to the amount of £12,000.'<sup>21</sup> However, by good fortune, the Board did manage to take on a new responsibility and to add to the list of schools under its exclusive management, and that at no extra cost - at least as regards site and erection. 'By the great liberality of the Trustees and Committee,' Dublin's School Street School was transferred to the Board. This establishment, built by voluntary subscription at a reported cost of more than £2,000, had been in operation since 1798. The original model school of the Kildare Place Society, it was capable of accommodating 1,000 children. Initially described as a 'Subsidiary Model School', it was later re-named West Dublin Model School. It was intended that it would be similar in general character to the more prestigious Central Model School.<sup>22</sup>

The first phase of site selection for District Model Schools was complete by 1849. The number stood at seven - nine if one includes West Dublin and the Central Model School. Of those under construction, each was to consist of three separate school-rooms - for males, females and infants - a residence for the headmaster, dormitories, dining and study halls for eight pupil teachers, and a servant's quarters. Living quarters were expected to be 'plainly but substantially furnished', while the school-rooms were to be 'fitted-up upon the most improved plan, well supplied with furniture and apparatus, adapted to the purpose of model institutions'. Furthermore, each school was to be provided with spacious play-grounds fitted with 'proper machines for gymnastic exercises'. A separate room for the use of clergymen undertaking religious instruction was also to be provided.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>C.N.E.I., *Fourteenth report ... 1847*, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 9 & 16 Mar. 1848.

<sup>22</sup>C.N.E.I., *Fifteenth report ... 1848*, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, p.11.

With regard to the manner in which the specific sites were chosen, the *Report* simply states that following the recommendations of the district inspectorate, their suggestions, along 'with several applications from local parties, having been considered', seven sites were selected.<sup>24</sup> On occasion the district inspector appeared to confine his contacts to a small number of people that wielded considerable local influence - in some cases a single landlord or his agent. With other applications numerous signed memorials were received. It is not clear to what extent the Board was influenced by the 'prayer' of memorialists, or whether petitions were got up at the instigation of district inspectors in support of their own recommendations. What becomes apparent from this period onward is that with only limited funding available, the Board was in a position to undertake the establishment of no more than one or two schools at a time. Other factors then could confer the decisive advantage.

This may have been the case with regard to the sanctioning of Athy and Galway as school locations. The initial Athy application, submitted in the name of the third Duke of Leinster, sought only a model agricultural school not a district model school. Clarification on the matter was requested in December 1848 and the records indicate that the more prestigious establishment was then urged by the applicant.<sup>25</sup> Considering that the Duke of Leinster had been the recipient of the original Stanley letter appointing him as a founding commissioner of the Board, and that his son, the Marquess of Kildare, was then a serving commissioner, a certain amount of indulgence was not unexpected. The Galway application appears to mark the beginning of a new era as the application was assessed by the full Board rather than the sub-committee as hitherto. It was presented to the Board in the form of a letter from under-secretary Redington, recently appointed commissioner. He enclosed a communication from 'A. O'Flagherty Esq., M.P. for Galway, recommending [the city] as a suitable place for a district model school and informing the commissioners that an eligible site can be obtained.' The commissioners instructed the district inspector to request O'Flagherty to provide details for the information of the Board. Inquiries allowed the commissioners to choose from among a number of sites, with the final decision not being made until 21 March 1850.<sup>26</sup> The engagement of the Board with the details of school applications, as in this case, reflected the fact that, with a much curtailed plan of school development, the number of applications for consideration was greatly reduced. In these more stringent times the Finance Committee advised the Board on the amount of money available for the expansion of the network, and the commissioners were guided by the findings of the inspectors' *post hoc* investigations. Only when the decision to proceed with the erection

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<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p.15.

<sup>25</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 7 Dec. 1848; 18 Jan. 1849.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 6 Sept. 1849, 24 Jan., 21 Mar. 1850.

of the minor model schools was taken in 1855 was a sub-committee again charged with the task of identifying suitable sites. Increasingly the tendency was for the Board to react to local applications. It had not got the funds to justify a pro-active approach.

#### **4.3 District and Minor Model Schools, 1850-60**

By 1851 only three further schools were in hand - Waterford, Kilkenny and Limerick, and these were at the stage of site acquisition. The recommendation of the Finance Committee at the end of 1852 that a sufficient sum be included in the estimates for the establishment of two additional district model schools prompted the Board to investigate possible sites in Belfast and to consider the erection of a model school in the Smithfield area of Dublin. The Belfast inquiry was in response to a letter from 'Valentine Whitla Esq' concerning the provision of a maritime school. Such institutions were to become a feature of the district model schools in the port cities of Waterford, Limerick and Londonderry. In Dublin a suitable site was quickly identified in Manor Street but the project was abandoned by October of 1853 due to a failure to reach agreement with the lessor on the question of access to the site.<sup>27</sup> Whatever sense of disappointment there may have been was more than compensated for by the adoption of the Inchicore Railway School as a quasi-model school. This arose from a request by the directors of the Great Southern and Western Railway for the erection of a national school on their property. They backed the proposal with a promise of £500 towards the cost of erection. The offer appealed to the Board following the agreement of the directors of G.S.&W.R. in May 1854 to place the schools, if erected under the control of the Board, with the property 'on a lease forever'. Little time was wasted in seeing the project through to completion and the school was ready to open in September, 1854.<sup>28</sup> An important feature was the inclusion of an evening school 'for the scientific instruction of the mechanics, artisans, and other workmen employed by the Company'. This unexpected and entirely satisfactory turn of events led the Commissioners to see prospects in the development for a further expansion of its own operations, declaring the institution as 'designed to serve as a model for Railway Schools throughout Ireland'.<sup>29</sup> Like West Dublin, it did not fit neatly into the normal category of model school. It was described as belonging 'to a class of schools intermediate between the District Model School and the best of the Ordinary National schools'.<sup>30</sup>

The Board's grand plan received a further timely fillip from an unexpected source in 1854. A controversy involving Archbishop Whately erupted over the non-use of two of

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 18 Mar., 7 June, 19 Aug., 16 Sept., 21 Oct. 1853.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 18 May 1853.

<sup>29</sup>*Twenty-first report of the commissioners of education in Ireland, 1854* (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Twenty-first report ... 1854*), p.14.

<sup>30</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 18 Mar. 1853; 15 Sept. 1854.

his books - *Introductory Lessons on Christian Evidence* and *Scripture Lessons* - in Newry and Clonmel District Model Schools. The matter, first brought to the notice of the Board in July 1852, received much attention during the year that followed. An attempt at compromise proved unacceptable to Whately. Such were his feelings on the matter that when it became obvious that he could not have his way, he resigned. He was joined in this course of action by fellow commissioners, Lord Chancellor Blackbourne and Richard Greene.<sup>31</sup>

This acrimonious dispute led directly to an inquiry by a select committee of the House of Lords in 1854.<sup>32</sup> While primarily concerned with the 'Whately affair', it was wide ranging in scope and neutral in tone. Regarding the non-introduction of Whately's texts into the Newry and Clonmel schools, it is obvious that it was done out of deference to Roman Catholic concerns. Its practical effect was to reinforce the support of Bishop Michael Blake of Dromore for the Newry project, and of Rev. John Baldwin, parish priest of St. Mary's, for Clonmel.<sup>33</sup> Resident Commissioner Macdonnell, whose decision it was to omit the works, claimed before the Inquiry that there was 'no rule or principle of the Board which required that they [Whately's books] should be introduced into all model schools' and that the only rule on the subject 'would lead one to infer that it would not be a right thing to introduce them if we knew beforehand that they were sure to be objected to by the parents'.<sup>34</sup> More importantly, he informed the committee that the commissioners had been made aware, by the secretary, Maurice Cross, of the action taken, shortly after the opening of the Clonmel school. As he recollected, there were four other commissioners present at the meeting - Andrews, Gibson, O'Ferrall and Henry - and they, he informed the Inquiry, 'agreed with me in that view, and thought we had exercised a wise discretion, and that nothing else need be done in the matter'.

Significantly, Archbishop Whately was not present at the meeting, and no 'direct' effort was made to inform the other absent commissioners. Macdonnell seemed satisfied that the information could be gleaned from the weekly reports from the two schools which were presented at each Board Meeting.<sup>35</sup> Obviously they were rarely if ever examined as the matter was not again raised at the Board for another three years. But Macdonnell was being less than candid. He had been instrumental in suppressing a section of Kavanagh's 1851 *Report* on Clonmel in which it was stated that the *Scripture Extracts*

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<sup>31</sup>This controversy is dealt with in great detail by Akenson, *Irish education experiment*, pp 258-73. Developments are also closely followed in *Powis*, i pt. II, 127-141, quoting extensively from official records.

<sup>32</sup>*Lords' inquiry ... 1854*.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, Evidence of Alexander Macdonnell, p. 237 (Q. 1574); evidence of J.W. Kavanagh, p. 316 (Q. 2294).

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 238 (Q. 1582).

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 2389 (Q.s. 1577-9)



were not read in the school.<sup>36</sup> It was left to Whately to stumble on the truth during a visit to Clonmel District Model School in July, 1852.

The Inquiry issued no agreed findings. However, a number of the members of the select committee did issue suggestions. Those of the chairman, Earl Granville, were by far the most extensive and important. He was of the opinion that the number of pupil teachers and paid monitors being trained was inadequate and should be greatly increased. Concomitant with this belief was his desire to have a proportionate augmentation in capacity of the Central Training Institution, and an extension, where feasible, of the period of training to twelve months. While this on its own would have encouraged the Commissioners of National Education, his support for an expansion of their involvement in the building and running of a number of *élite* national schools gave much needed official sanction to their efforts. He urged

that the Commissioners be empowered to build a limited number of ordinary national schools in the poorest localities in Ireland, in which local subscriptions cannot be raised, at the entire expense of the state - not to exceed £400 each; these schools to exhibit the best specimens of what good ordinary National schools should be. They are to be under the exclusive control of the Commissioners, who shall have the power to appoint the teachers, &c.; and in cases where it is practicable, to appoint committees composed of Protestants and Roman Catholics to visit and superintend them, under the direction of the Board.<sup>37</sup>

This proposal differed in one important aspect from that first mooted in 1846. Under favourable circumstances, it envisaged an inter-denominational involvement at the local level in their management, in a sense replicating the constitution of the Board. It may also be noted that Granville did not suggest that these new schools should have a preparatory training function.

The opening comment of the Chairman highlighted what he saw as the principal contributory factor to Whately's stance - a certain ambiguity in the Rules and Regulations of the Board. His suggestion 'that the Rules of the Board shall be revised with a view of rendering them perfectly clear, full, and explicit on the fundamental principles of the system ...' provided the Commissioners with a justification for revising their rule.

The Board's response was to appoint a committee of five Protestants and one Roman Catholic to undertake the task of reviewing their rules. By April 1855 the committee had completed its work and both the old and revised rules were forwarded to the Lord Lieutenant. In the following month the proposed changes received his approval.

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<sup>36</sup>*Powis*, iv, App. 16, p. 1306.

<sup>37</sup>Quoted in *Powis*, i, pt. 1, 141.

Immediately, the Board moved on the issue of ordinary national schools vested in themselves. It was decided that there should be one in each of the six head inspectors' districts, with the same officers charged with the task of recommending suitable localities.<sup>38</sup> At this stage there was still no mention of a preparatory training function for these schools, but the Board had departed from the spirit of the Earl of Granville's proposal in one important respect. The idea of a local inter-denominational monitoring committee was disregarded. Judging from the manner in which the national system had developed over time, it is most likely that the commissioners would have regarded this proposition as impracticable. The suggestions of the head inspectors were not brought before the Board until April 1856, when it was decided that a sub-committee would identify the most suitable localities. The following week a proposal that the town of Omagh be selected was, along with the results of head inspector James Patten's investigations, passed to the sub-committee for consideration. Omagh was an obvious choice, as an earlier memorial in favour of a district model school there had been turned down with the promise that it would be reconsidered by the commissioners 'under certain conditions'. The term 'minor model school' was first used in connection with this application. By early August the sub-committee had identified seven locations - Carrickfergus, Ballycastle, Ballyclare, Omagh, Monaghan, Bandon and Parsonstown (Birr). The Commissioners approved of all, with the exception of Ballyclare. Suitable sites had already been located in Carrickfergus and Omagh, and the relevant district inspectors were instructed to inquire in the other named towns. As the time neared for construction to begin, qualified approval was given to a suggestion from head inspector W.A. Hunter that residences for head masters be attached.<sup>39</sup> As it transpired, of the seven originally selected, only four - those of Carrickfergus, Omagh, Monaghan and Parsonstown - were proceeded with. Three others - Lurgan, Newtownstewart and Ballymoney - were added to the list. The last named had operated as an ordinary agricultural model school since 1852.

A degree of mystery surrounds the decision to jettison Bandon. Doubts as to the prospects of the proposed school were expressed by head inspector Dr. W.H. Newell early in 1857. By October, the project was abandoned on Newell's advice. The decisive factor was the strong opposition voiced by the rector, the Reverend C.B. Bernard, who had the ear of the Duke of Devonshire, one of the town's two major property holders.<sup>40</sup> Bernard, Secretary to the Cork, Cloyne and Ross Diocesan Society,<sup>41</sup> was anxious that no school should be established in Bandon that would threaten his own flourishing parish school. Forced to look elsewhere, attention focused on Youghal, but the Board's

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<sup>38</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 20 Apr., 18, 25 May 1855.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 Dec. 1855, 18, 25 Apr., 8 Aug. 1856; 6 Mar. 1857.

<sup>40</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 13 Feb., 17 July, 2, 9 Oct. 1857.

<sup>41</sup> *Eighteenth report of the Church Education Society for Ireland, 1857* (Dublin, 1858), p. 32.

attempt to put in place a minor model school in that town were successfully thwarted by the efforts of the parish priest, the Reverend T. Murphy. He was as equally determined to protect the newly opened Christian Brothers' school in that town as Bernard was to secure the future of the Bandon parish school. Most certainly in the case of Bandon a combination of Established Church opposition, both clerical and lay, inclined the Board to avoid a head-on confrontation. In January 1858 the prospect of establishing a district model school in Cork city, where it was always likely that sufficient support could be forthcoming, proved more appealing. By the Board's decision to locate ultimately all but one of its minor model schools in Ulster, it could be argued that expected Roman Catholic opposition at the local level was already having its effect. Only in the case of Parsonstown, due no doubt to the solid support of the Earl of Rosse, did the Board stand firm against local Roman Catholic opposition.

By 1860 the number of district model schools in operation stood at thirteen; four more were in the course of construction, and a further two were at planning stage. The respective figures for the minor model schools were four, two and one.<sup>42</sup> When those of the 'Metropolitan District' are added, we arrive at a final figure of twenty-nine. The manner in which these figures were given in the *Report* for 1860 conveyed an air of finality. In the previous year, one of the chiefs of inspection, P.J. Keenan, had floated the idea of non-vested model schools. That same year witnessed a concerted effort by the Roman Catholic bishops in a memorial to the lord lieutenant, the Earl of Carlisle, to press their claim for a denominational system. Their views were given weight by the support of nineteen Irish Liberal M.P.s. They claimed that the arrangements for the boarding of candidate teachers in model schools - 'youths removed from all domestic control, and subjected to no adequate collegiate discipline, formed no part of the original scheme of education.' They reiterated the injustice complained of by the bishops - that while Roman Catholics formed a majority of the pupils in the national schools they were represented by a Roman Catholic minority on the Board.<sup>43</sup> Though the government held firm on the founding principle of a non-denominational system, it conceded on the question of equitable representation. A supplemental charter was granted that increased the number of commissioners to twenty, half of whom would be Roman Catholics. Under these changed circumstances, both within the Board and from powerful political and religious interests, it is difficult to see how a further expansion of the network could be proceeded with.

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<sup>42</sup> *Twenty-seventh report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland, 1860* (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Twenty-seventh report ... 1860*), p. 23.

<sup>43</sup> Letter to Edward Cardwell [then Secretary at the Home Office], 10 Aug. 1860, quoted in *Powis*, i, pt. 1, 170-2.

Matters came to a head on the civil estimates debate in July, 1861. Irish members of the House voiced criticism of the excessive expenditure on model schools, and protested that they were superfluous to the educational needs of the towns where they were located. Edward Cardwell, Secretary at the Home Office, did not disagree:

It was contended that the expenditure on model schools should not be increased. If that [the occasion of his speech] were the proper opportunity; he should be most ready to add his humble tribute to the admiration which such schools as those in Marlborough Street and Belfast elicited from all visitors; but, as the expenditure on the model schools had grown very considerably, he thought it would be much more satisfactory that no further engagements should be made by the Commissioners with respect to the model schools without first obtaining the sanction of the Government, so that they might have the opportunity of submitting the matter to that House before any decision was come to.<sup>44</sup>

Damned with faint praise, further Board expansion of the system of vested model schools was at an end.

#### ***4.4 Planning and Construction***

Parallel with its efforts to identify suitable locations and sites, the Board had also to devise arrangements for planning and building. Initially, the expertise of the Board of Public Works architect, Jacob Owen, was sought in a private capacity, and he was directed, at the 'Special Meeting' of 7 May 1846, to prepare plans without delay. By 11 June these were submitted to the Board. Already, the sub-committee had consulted with Owen on 'the several plans' which he had prepared, three of which they chose. They further recommended that

elevations of them, in three different styles of architecture be forthwith drawn out, and that one school house on each plan be erected in three of the localities which they have selected [Newry, Trim and Drogheda]. They also recommend that Mr. Owen should be directed to prepare specifications and estimates of the expense of building and furnishing each of the District Model Schools, and to state for the information of the Commissioners what arrangements he would suggest for procuring tenders for the erection of the buildings, and for inspecting the works in progress, by persons competent to perform such a duty.

The sub-committee's recommendations received the approbation of the Board.<sup>45</sup> The architect was given a considerable degree of autonomy, but with no advice as to cost. This approach, though it saved the Board from day to day involvement in the arrangements for building, denied them early influence over costs. In practical terms, it meant the commissioners were presented with a *fait accompli*. By November the demands of the project were such as to be beyond the part-time capacity of Owen. He resigned and was replaced by Frederick Darley, who was appointed architect to the

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<sup>44</sup> *Hansard* 1861, clxiv pp 917-9.

<sup>45</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 7 May, 24 July 1846.

Board.<sup>46</sup> Rather than proceed with the plans already approved, Darley was directed, in January 1847, to visit the principal training establishments in England and Scotland along with ‘the best ordinary schools of the poor’. On the basis of the information gathered he was to furnish the commissioners with plans and suggestions for their consideration.<sup>47</sup> This he was in position to do by late May, when his designs were received by the sub-committee. It is not recorded as recommending their adoption. Instead, both Owen’s and Darley’s plans were presented to the commissioners for decision. The Board favoured those of the latter ‘as better suited to the purpose, and affording larger accommodation, though more expensive’.<sup>48</sup> A ‘Special Meeting’ was called for 3 June to take a final decision. The outcome was never in doubt as Darley was invited to attend and was given the opportunity of commenting on the merits of the respective plans. Guided by his observations it was

ordered that the Commissioners find from the estimates before them that the probable expense of erecting the District Model Schools according to the plans furnished by Mr. Owen, exclusive of furniture, will be about £1,800, and according to those of Mr. Darley from £2,800 to £3,000, **but that they consider the latter better adapted to the contemplated object, and more complete in every respect; that they, therefore, approve of the same...**

The secretaries were directed to acquaint the lord lieutenant of the decision. In light of the high cost involved, the commissioners accepted that the completion of the overall plan would take longer ‘as it will not be in their power to erect more than a limited number in each year’.<sup>49</sup>

The failure of the Board from the start to impose a financial limit on expenditure in its arrangements with its architects, combined with its own apparent lack of concern on the matter, increased the probability that costs would escalate. Owen’s comparatively modest plans were estimated at more than twice the intended figure, while those of Darley were approaching four times that. As it transpired, even these were exceeded in almost all cases when a new school had to be built. Galway, at £2,532, was the only one to be built to budget. The prices of the others ranged from £3,413 (Clonmel) to £11,201 (Belfast). Similarly, the initial figure of £400 mentioned for the cost of erection of Minor Model Schools was never adhered to. Ballymoney, the cheapest, where the existing building was refurbished, cost £1,480, while Lurgan, at £5,923 was the most expensive (see *Table I*). These costs included architectural fees. Initially, on Darley’s suggestion, it was agreed that his fee should be set at five per cent of the cost of each school. This sum, he informed the commissioners, would cover ‘all expenses incurred in

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 12 Nov. 1846.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 14 Jan. 1847.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 28 May 1847.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 3 June 1847. Emphasis mine.

preparing plans, specifications, etc., and for inspecting the buildings at least five times during the progress of the work, and oftener if deemed necessary.<sup>50</sup>

*Table I*

<b><i>District and Minor Model Schools</i></b>			
Name of School	Cost of Erection	Cost of Furnishing	Date of Opening
	£	£	
<b>Ballymena</b>	4138	609	May, 1849
<b>Newry</b>	4341	635	May, 1849
<b>Clonmel</b>	3413	640	Aug., 1849
<b>Dunmanway</b>	4768	524	Aug., 1849
<b>Bailieborough</b>	2984	592	May, 1850
<b>Trim</b>	4880	514	May, 1850
<b>Coleraine</b>	3516	309	May, 1850
<b>Galway</b>	2532	800	July, 1852
<b>Athy</b>	4658	1263	Aug., 1852
<b>Kilkenny</b>	4090	287	Nov., 1854
<b>Limerick</b>	4109	364	Aug., 1855
<b>Waterford</b>	5575	449	Sept., 1855
<b>*Ballymoney</b>	1480	131	Feb., 1856
<b>Belfast</b>	11201	1464	Mar., 1857
<b>*Omagh</b>	2562	97	Feb., 1860
<b>*Parsonstown</b>	2363	23	Oct., 1860
<b>*Carrickfergus</b>	3869	74	Feb., 1861
<b>*Newtownstewart</b>	1693	22	June, 1861
<b>*Monaghan</b>	3676	63	Oct., 1861
<b>Londonderry</b>	7472	512	Jan., 1862
<b>Enniscorthy</b>	6422	69	July, 1862
<b>Newtownards</b>	9531	133	July, 1862
<b>*Lurgan</b>	5923	372	Feb., 1863
<b>Sligo</b>	7825	108	Aug., 1863
<b>Cork</b>	9495	267	Sept., 1865
<b>Enniskillen</b>	9358	94	Aug., 1867

(Source: *Powis*, vii, 73.)

By the end of July 1847 plans for the sanctioned projects were ready to go for tender and advertisements were placed in both the Dublin and the relevant provincial papers. The first tenders began to arrive in early September, with the Board accepting the recommendations of the sub-committee. It should be noted here that these successful tenders - £2,101 for Newry and £2,293 for Ballymena, were well within the estimates.<sup>51</sup> However, the respective final costs, for erection alone, were £4,340 and £4,138.<sup>52</sup> In fairness to the Board, it must be accepted that the original costings were adopted in good

<sup>50</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 17 June 1847.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 2, 11 Sept. 1847.

<sup>52</sup>*Powis*, vii, 73.

faith. Once the projects were underway they were very much dependent on the ability of the architect to ensure that there were no overruns. The ineffectiveness of the measures taken to control costs is where the Board was most culpable.

Before building could be commenced, Geale and Dwyer, solicitors to the Board, in consultation with the architect, drew up agreements to be entered into by both the Board and the contractors. When finalised in December, it required successful contractors to provide two solvent sureties acceptable to the Board, and to enter into a bond for the due performance of the work. A ten per cent penalty was to apply in cases of default. Under the agreement the Commissioners were entitled to retain twenty per cent pending a satisfactory report from the architect.<sup>53</sup> A year later, in November 1848, Darley's report to the Board of his approval 'of the manner in which the District Model Schools have been built and of the estimates for furnishing the same' was accepted unquestioningly.<sup>54</sup> The *Minutes* of 5 July 1849 gave the first indication of rising concerns. At this meeting it was decided that Darley should be paid a fixed salary of £350 per annum, with permission to retain his private practice. In recognition of the workload, two clerks of work were to be appointed at £3 per week. Due to the travel necessarily involved, both the architect and his assistants were given subsistence allowances.<sup>55</sup> This arrangement was rationalised at some length in the 1849 *Report*,<sup>56</sup> but the most startling section of the *Report* was that detailing the progress to date on the erection of the district model schools, since it contained the first public admission of significant cost overruns. It was now accepted that each model school would cost almost £5,000, 'including every expense'. The only positive financial news was the expectation that the annual running cost would not exceed £400. The principal causes of the additional expense were identified. None remotely touched on inadequacies in the controls exercised by the Board and its officials, or the performance of the architect. All were attributed to local complications or to necessary, though unforeseen, modifications. The Board robustly defended its performance:

Taking into account therefore, all the difficulties incident to a new undertaking of great extent, and considering that our District Model Schools are institutions of great national importance, we are of opinion; that a large expenditure, in their erection upon a suitable scale, was necessary, in order to render them in all respects complete. The works have been executed in a satisfactory manner. The plan and style of the buildings reflect credit upon Mr. Darley, the Architect to our Board...

Only at the conclusion of the section were the implications of excessive expenditure indicated. Even at that, the commissioners were upbeat; they declared themselves

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<sup>53</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 20 Dec. 1847.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, 2 November 1848.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, 5 July 1849.

<sup>56</sup>*C.N.E.I., Sixteenth report ... 1849*, p. 5.

‘resolved’ rather than ‘confined’ to building ‘only two[model schools] during the coming year’.<sup>57</sup>

The buoyant tone of the Board’s public response to spiralling expenditure masked the mounting private concern that the problem should be tackled. In November, Darley was asked to investigate a cost overrun of £1,000 on the Clonmel school, and, more importantly, the Finance Committee was asked to discover the attitude of the Board of Works in such instances. The architect explained away the increase by attributing the greater part of it to errors in measurement by one of his employees, and additional work not included in the original estimate. This meeting was attended by J. Radcliff Esq., one of the Commissioners of the Board of Public Works who explained the practice of that body as to payment of contracts. Arising from the ensuing deliberations, the Finance Committee made a number of recommendations. Firstly, they suggested that all future contracts, as far as practicable, should be similar to those devised by the Board of Public Works and the Poor Law Commissioners. Secondly, they proposed that the Board thenceforward should not be responsible for any errors on the part of the architect or his staff, and that he could authorise additional work only on the receipt of authority from the Board. Thirdly, in cases of dispute between the contractor and the architect, the Board should be guided by the advice of the latter. Finally, it was suggested that an amended form of contract should be drawn up by Radcliff, Darley and Sherlock (law advisor to the Board) to be laid before the Board for final approval.<sup>58</sup>

These suggestions proved to be of questionable effectiveness. The architect’s explanation of the overrun in the cost of furnishing and fitting at Newry and Ballymena, prompted the Board to order that prior to the settlement of such accounts the situation on the ground be checked out by an officer of the Board of Public Works.<sup>59</sup> Figures provided at a meeting of 14 February 1849 showed that the percentage cost overruns in relation to Newry, Ballymena and Dunmanway were eighty-seven per cent, sixty-two per cent, and forty-two per cent respectively.<sup>60</sup> In the face of continuing problems further efforts were made, in May of that year, to tighten up the articles of agreement between the builders and commissioners.<sup>61</sup> An unwillingness on the part of the commissioners to review radically its relationship with the architect led to further vacillation. The five per cent commission was extended to additional work on outstanding contracts, for which he had provided plans. For work which was incorrectly quantified by his employee, he received a reduced commission of two and a half per

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<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>58</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 22 Nov. 1849.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 7 Feb. 1850.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, 14 Feb. 1850.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 9 May 1850.



cent. On additional work for which he did not provide plans five per cent was also allowed 'on first fittings', with the lower rate applying to subsequent work.<sup>62</sup>

Eventually the Board had to accept that its various strategies had failed. From the start its approach had been fraught with danger. Elaborate plans were encouraged. Modifications to individual plans were accepted uncritically. While there is no reason to impugn the motives of the architect, payment by commission, in the absence of an independent and professional watchdog, did not encourage stringency. By the time professional help was sought legally binding contracts had already been entered into. Under these circumstances it was always likely that fiscal control would be weak. It now accepted that the elaborate nature of the plans that it had sanctioned were at the root of the problem. A 'Special Meeting' at the end of August considered 'the expediency of having plans prepared by the Architect of the Board for District Model Schools of a plainer and less costly description'.<sup>63</sup> This limited response, lacking in detail and avoiding the issue of accountability, served only to allay unease, and to put off the day of reckoning.

As a delaying tactic it worked until early 1854, by which time the Treasury had begun to show concern. In June of that year it suggested that the building programme be transferred to the Board of Public Works. The Board's response was to ask Darley to report on the shortcomings of his own department. The problem to him was seen as one of lack of manpower to complete the projects in hand - farm buildings at the Munster Model Farm, Belfast District Model School, and new lecture rooms at Marlborough Street. The commissioners went along with this suggestion, permitting him to employ on a temporary basis 'such number of assistants as he may consider necessary to prepare all the plans'.<sup>64</sup> Despite this, there were still complaints, particularly about delays in drawing up plans for Belfast District Model School. Government sanction for the erection of minor model schools in 1856 determined that the issue be revisited as a matter of urgency. This time the commissioners complied with the Treasury request that the architect's department be transferred to the Board of Public Works.<sup>65</sup> Frederick Darley's term as a Board employee ended on 1 April 1857. He was permitted to see through to completion his unfinished projects - Newtownards District Model School and the seven 'practising' schools which were under the course of construction in the Marlborough Street complex.<sup>66</sup> Ultimately, blame for the excessive cost overruns did

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 30 May 1850.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 29 Aug., 5 Sept. 1850.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 2 Feb. 1854.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 19 Aug. 1856.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 3 Apr. 1857.

not lie primarily with the architect, but rather with the Board's failure to recognise the deficiencies in its own system of controls.

The Board of Public Works oversaw the construction of six district, and a like number of minor model schools. The Board of National Education now confined its involvement to deciding on applications and to requesting the Board of Public Works to make provision in its estimates for the projects sanctioned. The latter's performance though must have been equally worrying from the point of view of the Treasury. Initially, it did manage to keep down the costs of the minor model schools, but before long they proved to be every bit as prone to cost overrun as the district model schools had been. By the time Lurgan Minor Model School was opened in 1863 it had cost almost as much as Enniscorthy District Model School which had opened just six months earlier. In evidence to the Powis Commission, James H. Owen, architect to the Board of Public Works, and son of Jacob Owen whom he succeeded, was questioned about the relationship between the two Boards, and asked to justify the costs incurred.<sup>67</sup> The Inquiry appeared anxious to discover whether or not the Commissioners of National Education were consulted as to cost. Owen believed that they confined themselves to informing the Board of Works about the expected attendance and to the accommodation to be provided in the residential quarters. On the basis of this information, and his familiarity with existing schools, he drew up his plans. As he understood matters, the Commissioners of National Education did not inquire as to cost. That was solely the responsibility of the Board of Works, and they were answerable to the Treasury in this respect. Under close questioning from Cowie, he doubted that the later model schools were more expensive than the others. While costing more in absolute terms, he suggested that if an allowance of twenty per cent were made for an increase in costs, and that if the extent of accommodation provided were taken into account 'it would turn out that they were executed at very moderate rates'. The high cost of Cork and Enniskillen he explained away by reference to particular difficulties encountered in the construction process. The fine appearance of the first named he suggested was not an indication of excessive cost but rather that it was 'from the shape and the disposition of the masses it gets its effect'. Overall, he expressed himself satisfied with his work. While he accepted that he 'put up the buildings with a certain amount of appearance', he was firmly of the view that, unlike some of the earlier efforts, they had the look of schools about them and were good value for money.

The protestations of James Owen notwithstanding, the involvement of the Board of Public Works in the design and construction of model schools failed to halt the rise in cost. In the evidence to the Powis Commission, it, too, comes across as a public body

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<sup>67</sup>*Powis*, iv, 1267-73.

where accountability for spending was of secondary importance to protecting or increasing one's share of the Treasury's liberality. During a period when the attitude of the Treasury towards Irish education has been described as sympathetic,<sup>68</sup> the raising of occasional concerns regarding the level of spending risked being dismissed as carping. As we have seen, a government statement on the matter in the Commons was ultimately to signify its support for the stance of the Treasury.

#### **4.5 Operational Arrangements and Regulations**

Both Ballymena and Newry District Model Schools opened in May 1849. For some months prior to this the Board was engaged in devising the general arrangements under which the schools would be run. This involved making arrangements for the appointment of teachers, setting salary scales, selecting pupil teachers and monitors, setting a course of studies for them, deciding on school fees, ensuring that religious instruction was given and regular inspection carried out.

As early as September, 1848, the secretary was authorized to procure estimates for bedding, while Frederick Darley was consulted as to the practicality of purchasing the other items of furniture 'in the towns or in the neighbourhood of them where such schools are situated'. At the same meeting staffing arrangements were also considered, and the district inspectors were requested to forward 'a list of such national teachers as they may deem eligible for holding the office of teachers of District Model Schools'.<sup>69</sup> The pace of events quickened noticeably in early 1849. In January the head and district inspectors were informed by circular 'of the qualifications the Commissioners deem necessary for a teacher of a District Model School'.<sup>70</sup> This suggests that members of the inspectorate had sought clarification of the previous order. A 'special committee', comprising the three already on the district model school sub-committee along with Commissioners Gibson and Andrews, presented the Board with a list of arrangements for adoption early in the following month.<sup>71</sup> These included, *inter alia*:

- That the names of candidates for the situation of teachers ... be submitted to the Professors and the Head Inspectors to recommend the most eligible candidates.
- That the Head Master ... receive a salary of £60 p.a., a furnished residence, fuel and candles, and half the amount received as school fees.
- That he be allowed £20 p.a. for one thorough servant, including wages, maintenance, and the expense of keeping the school room clean.

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<sup>68</sup> Aine Hyland, 'The Treasury and Irish education: 1850-1922: the myth and the reality', *Irish Educational Studies*, iii, no. 2, (1983), p. 65. Hyland claims that 'there was little or no tension between the National Board and the Treasury [during the 1850s and 1860s] because the Treasury believed that expenditure on elementary education was in line with that in Britain and they perceived that the system of administration was more efficient here than in Britain.'

<sup>69</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 28 Sept. 1848.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 Jan. 1849.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 Feb. 1849.

- That he be paid at the rate of £16 p.a. for each resident pupil, which is to include the cost of Board, maintenance, and other incidental expenses.
- that four monitors be selected for the male school to be paid according to the existing scale of salaries for monitors.
- That the Head Mistress receive a salary of £40 p.a., etc., and half the school fees; and the Workmistress £10 a year. Five monitresses to be paid according to the present scale.
- That the Mistress of the Infant School receive the same salary as the Head Teacher of the Female School.

Following on the adoption of these proposals, a request by head inspectors Edward Butler and William McCreedy to visit certain national schools from which teachers had been recommended for positions in the district model schools was approved. Moreover, they were directed to consult with the 'clergy and other parties' interested in the Newry and Ballymena schools. Their report on their findings, which included a list of suitable teachers, was referred to the 'Special Committee'.<sup>72</sup> Just prior to the opening of Newry and Ballymena more specific regulations were adopted. These acknowledged the role of the local clergy in the imparting of religious instruction. Their sanction would also be required for the lodgings on offer for the female teachers. A differential rate of school fees was to apply. A minimum of half the places in both the male and female schools was reserved for those unable to afford more than 1*d.* per week. Of the remainder at least twenty per cent were to be charged 2*s.*6*d.* and fifteen per cent 5*s.* per quarter. In the infant school the highest rate was not to apply. Instead twenty-five per cent were to be levied at the intermediate rate, with the remainder paying the basic weekly amount. Places at the higher rates which were not filled were to be given at the 1*d.* weekly rate. Payments were to be made in advance.

In respect of its training function, four pupil teachers were to be appointed immediately to each district model school, with another four after six months. These candidates were to be selected by the relevant head and district inspectors after sitting a written examination drawn up by the head inspectors based on the 'Paid Monitors Programme'. Pupil teachers were not to be under 16 or above 20 years of age. Each was to possess, at entrance, a specified outfit - the cost of which may have served as a deterrent in some instances.<sup>73</sup>

It is clear that the Board also considered the appointment of female pupil teachers, though this was deferred, probably due to concerns about adequate supervision of lodgings. Instead, four paid monitresses were to be appointed - two each for the female

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<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, 22 Feb., 29 Mar. 1849.

<sup>73</sup>*Twenty-first report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1854*, [1950], H.C. 1854-5, xxiii (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Twenty-first report ... 1854*) p.154. The clothing requirements embraced: 2 Suits of Clothes; 2 Night Shirts; 6 Day shirts; 6 Pair of Socks or Stockings; 4 Neckties; 6 Pocket Handkerchiefs; 2 Pair of Shoes; 1 Pair of Slippers; Haircomb, Hairbrush, and Toothbrush

and infant schools. A library was to be annexed for the use of both senior and junior staffs.

On the subject of inspection, the district inspector was to visit at least once a week and to submit his report on a prescribed form. The teachers themselves were exempted from the usual annual exams but were liable to be specially examined 'when thought necessary' by the head inspectors. The students of the schools were to undergo a public oral examination each summer after which book prizes were to be awarded to the most deserving.

The significant deviation in these regulations from those first publicised concerned pupil teachers. The number of pupil teachers appointed to each establishment was increased in 1849 from three to eight, and the course was extended from six months to one year. In effect, this increase in the number of male pupil teachers did not improve the expected overall annual output of pupil teachers, as no female pupil teachers were appointed. The Board, in its 1849 *Report* adverted to further changes which they also 'deemed expedient'. The distinct departments in each school would now be designed to accommodate in excess of one hundred children, while in 'Bailieborough and Dunmanway District Schools, being situated in comparatively small towns, an agricultural department has been added, with suitable farm buildings, in place of an infant school.'<sup>74</sup> In time, the agricultural department would also become a feature of some of the district model schools in the larger population centres.

Before long the Board had to address the problem of Roman Catholic Church Holydays. This was accepted more as an everyday practical issue which had to be addressed rather than a divisive ideological matter. Arrangements in the Central Model School provided the precedent. Roman Catholics were allowed to absent themselves on those days, while those Protestants 'such as choose to attend shall receive secular instruction from the Protestant teachers'.<sup>75</sup> As seen above with reference to Whately's texts, activities of a more covert nature were even then resorted to to allay Roman Catholic concerns.

In 1851, with seven district model schools in operation, and barely a hint of controversy, the Board was understandably upbeat in its assessment of its achievement to date. Paramount among the beneficial effects that they claimed for the model schools was the changing attitude to, and the rise in the standard of education available generally in the various localities. Those pupils who withdrew from the existing schools to attend the district model schools did not threaten the viability of the former. Instead, their places

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<sup>74</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, p.11.

<sup>75</sup>M.C.N.E.I., 23 Aug. 1849.

were taken by those who had previously been at best desultory in their attendance. This the commissioners attributed to the 'powerful influence' of the model schools 'in stimulating and improving education'.<sup>76</sup> These claims, based more on perception than statistical data, do not lend themselves to easy verification. The statistical data relating to the number of schools being taken into connection by the Board each year with the consequent rapid increase in the number of pupils on rolls in national schools could be used to support such an argument.<sup>77</sup> It was a view which held currency within the administration at the time. J. W. Kavanagh saw the establishment of ordinary national schools as stimulating other clergymen in the area to set up similar schools, while that of the school in Clonmel served to create 'a taste, a desire ... for education in the neighbourhood'. Furthermore, he claimed that some of the district model schools were instrumental in making the notion of 'united' education more acceptable in schools generally.<sup>78</sup>

The commissioners were concerned that the public and, especially, their elected representatives should view favourably the working arrangements of its district model schools. From 1849, reports submitted by the head inspectors were included in the annual *Reports* in order to ensure them wide circulation. These provided detail accounts on the operation of the individual schools and tended to comment on their efficiency in glowing terms. As a result, the commissioners were intent on ensuring there no omissions, so when in December 1853, 'in consequence of other engagements', Edward Butler informed his superiors that he had fallen behind in the examination of the district model schools under his superintendence, the Board's sensitivity on the matter was immediately obvious. A failure to publish all reports in the *Annual Report* 'which must be laid before Parliament at a much earlier period than usual' could have potentially undesirable consequences. 'Omissions from it of any of these documents can scarcely fail to attract particular attention and perhaps call forth unpleasant observations' the head inspector was warned.<sup>79</sup>

As noted earlier, the Board first stated its intention in 1853 to respond positively to 'several applications' it received concerning the provision of maritime education. By 1856, Waterford and Limerick District Model Schools, and 'a limited number of the ordinary national schools' had answered this request. Maritime departments were also attached to Belfast and Londonderry District Model Schools. The provision of this service involved the commissioners arranging in 1855 for the training of teachers in this

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<sup>76</sup> *Eighteenth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland, 1851* (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*), p. xxviii.

<sup>77</sup> Between 1833 and 1850 the number of national schools rose from 789 to 4,321, while pupils on rolls increased from 107,042 to 480,623 (Akenson, *Irish education experiment*, p.140).

<sup>78</sup> *Lords' Inquiry ... 1854*, p. 328 and p. 366.

<sup>79</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 30 Dec. 1853.

specialised area. The expertise was not available within its own officership. To overcome this, the Board turned to Dr Lyon Playfair, Joint Secretary of the 'Department of Practical Art' in London.<sup>80</sup> Initially, it was suggested to Dr Playfair that he might recommend suitable teachers for both Limerick and Waterford. In his reply, he informed the Board that he was not in a position to supply teachers of navigation, but suggested instead that teachers be sent over from Ireland for training. On the recommendation of the professors of the training institute and the head inspectors, three were chosen for training, with a fourth being later added.<sup>81</sup> Theoretical instruction appears to have been all that was contemplated. While the 1856 *Report*<sup>82</sup> declared that more detailed general arrangements would be included in that for 1857, this did not happen. The promised expansion into this branch of education and the planned 'instruction of such of the teachers in training as reside in districts bordering on the sea-coast' proved still-born. The wider programme appears to have been quietly dropped in favour of a concentration of effort on the teaching of the core subjects in the district model schools.

A revised version of the Board's *Rules and Regulations* was published in 1855. Ostensibly this revision was undertaken in an effort to dispel ambiguity. The updated version was divided into three sections. Part I dealt with the 'Object and Fundamental Principle of the System of National Education'; Part II the 'Different Classes of National Schools'; and Part III - the most involved - the conditions upon which aid was granted towards building and salary, the classification of teachers and regulations respecting their training. Included in the Appendices was a reprint of the earlier code to facilitate comparison, and a detailed listing of the duties of the district and sub-inspectors.<sup>83</sup> The 'Instructions' to the inspectorate contained in Appendix D greatly expanded on the duties attached to the position as set out in the 1849 *Report*. They included the most comprehensive advice to its officers on the manner in which the model schools were to be run. They dealt with the level of inspection expected in the day-to-day running of the schools, the selection of pupil-teachers and paid monitors, arrangements for their maintenance, the course of studies to be pursued, and the systematic monitoring of their progress. Much attention was also given to the financial minutiae. It is clear from them that the inspector was in effect the manager, responsible not only for the educational standards of the institution, but also for its social and financial probity. The extensive reports published annually, the numerous references to correspondence with the inspectors contained in the Board's *Minutes*, and the detailed entries in the school *Registers* indicate that these duties were assiduously attended to.

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<sup>80</sup>Between 1852 and 1857 it was based at Marlborough House, London. It is better remembered as the Science and Art Department during its later association with South Kensington.

<sup>81</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 10 Aug., 5 Sept., 9 Nov., 1855.

<sup>82</sup>*Twenty-third report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1856*, [2304], H.C. 1857-8, xx (henceforth *C.N.E.I.*, *Twenty-third report ... 1856*) p. xvi.

<sup>83</sup>*C.N.E.I.*, *Twenty-first report ... 1854*, pp 107-58.



In the regulations published in the 1846 *Report* it was stated that the candidate teachers were to be selected after public examination from among the paid monitors and other meritorious children in the national schools of the neighbourhood. This revised code, though much more detailed, gave no guidelines on the matter. It would appear that the inspectors were afforded a considerable degree of latitude. A letter addressed to head inspectors Butler and McCreedy in March 1849 concerning the arrangements for the opening of Ballymena and Newry District Model Schools invited them to state the 'mode of selection of pupil teachers' they intended to adopt.<sup>84</sup> The evidence of J.W. Kavanagh in 1854 suggested that while pupils of ordinary national schools in the neighbourhood of district model schools would be considered for appointments as pupil teachers, those educated in its model schools would have an advantage.<sup>85</sup> The secretary to the Board and a former head inspector, William Newell, confirmed the discretionary powers of the inspectors in the matter before the Powis Commission. When it came to filling vacancies he observed that, in general, recourse to the inspector's local knowledge regarding eligible candidates was more frequently appealed to than selection by examination. Newell was also of the opinion that, in the main, pupil teachers were recruited from the ranks of the students of the ordinary national schools, with those who had served as paid monitors having a distinct advantage.<sup>86</sup> While in this he differed with Kavanagh, it should be appreciated that the discretionary powers given to the inspectors resulted in local variations in practice and changing circumstances dictating the criteria that were adopted.

A significant change in the regulations was announced early the following year. The course of training for pupil teachers, where 'thought desirable', was extended to two years, with each retained pupil-teacher receiving a sum of £1 10s. per quarter, by way of inducement.<sup>87</sup> While never mandatory, it became the norm for those who wished to avail of it. In the absence of any increase in capacity, the commissioners appear to have favoured quality over quantity.

These regulations, with further minor changes, formed the basis on which the model schools - both district and minor - operated thereafter. The mandarins of Tyrone House had responded to the challenge. Over time, and in different ways - reflecting shifting opinions - suitable locations had been identified and sites had been acquired. The physical structures had been put in place, albeit not as quickly nor as extensively as first planned. Those regulations of an operational nature, pertaining to the daily running of

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<sup>84</sup>*Lords' Inquiry ... 1854*, App. F, p. 1350.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 366.

<sup>86</sup>*Powis*, iv, 1098.

<sup>87</sup>*C.N.E.I., Twenty-second report ... 1855*, p. 19.



the schools, underwent modification in the search for perfection. Through a combination of flexibility, commitment, and pragmatism - not always working in unison - the Commissioners of National Education had put an administrative structure in place.

## **An All-Ireland Network, 1846-57**

By chance the conclusion of the first phase of model school building coincided with a sea-change in the relationship between the government and the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Archbishops Crolly and Murray who had supported the administration in increasingly difficult circumstances during this period were both dead.<sup>1</sup> The attitude of the majority of the Roman Catholic hierarchy on the Queen's Colleges issues was distinctly more restive, buoyed, no doubt, by the issuing, in quick succession, of three Papal rescripts on the matter between October 1847 and April 1850. The arrival of Paul Cullen, a man with a clear track record of opposition if not outright hostility towards government interference in education, as papal legate and archbishop sealed the issue. As he consolidated his power base through direct intervention in episcopal appointments, it became only a matter of short time before his attitude towards the national system in general, and model schools in particular would begin to be felt.

### **5.1 A lack of active opposition**

There was no agreed approach by the commissioners in determining the location of the early district model schools. Nor was there uniformity in the manner in which the applications were generated. But in every instance the initial application or report was followed up by a thorough investigation before being referred to the Sub-Committee for final sanction. Cross-denominational support most assuredly conferred a distinct advantage. In its absence, the lack of active opposition was taken into consideration. In these matters the Board's officials had to act sensitively to assuage the suspicions of some of the local clergy and to avoid offending the sensibilities of others. On balance, the locations selected were those where there was a likelihood, judging by the existing level of inter-denominational co-operation, that the principle of united education would not be assailed. An examination of the documentation relating to the individual locations chosen will concentrate on gauging the level of this co-operation and the likely effectiveness of the arrangements adopted in each school in underpinning it.

The Newry memorial, dated 3 September, 1845, was submitted to the commissioners by the vicar, Daniel Bagot. Newry, the memorialists suggested, was a town in which the

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<sup>1</sup>Of these two, Cullen believed Crolly to be the more formidable. Regarding him, he wrote that it was 'a pity [the] Primate is not to be relied on in these matters [the Colleges Act] - it is a pity that Rome should make him the organ of her communications - were it not for him Dr. Murray would be easily managed'. (quoted in A. Macaulay, *William Crolly, Archbishop of Armagh, 1835-49*, (Dublin, 1994) p. 372). Donal Kerr gives the most recent assessment of Murray's character, 'Dublin's forgotten archbishop, Daniel Murray - 1768-1852' in James Kelly and Daire Keogh (eds) *History of the Catholic Diocese of Dublin* (Dublin, 2000), pp 247-67.

working of the national system could be seen at its best, and where the establishment of a model school would help to counter the prejudice against the system in the area. In the accompanying letter Bagot stated that

this application is signed by clergymen of all religious denominations - by five magistrates - by gentlemen residents in the town - by the *principal* merchants, and by the *leading* persons of the constituency of Newry. If I had applied to a lower class for signatures it would have been signed by *hundreds*.<sup>2</sup>

Of the clergy listed among the memorialists were Michael Blake, Roman Catholic Bishop of Dromore, a Roman Catholic curate, and three Presbyterian ministers.

As the Board had not yet decided on the regulations governing the establishment of model schools, consideration of the application was deferred. In January, Daniel Bagot was again in contact with the Board. The content of the letter indicates that the Board had acted on the memorial and that a suitable site had been identified provided a lease in perpetuity could be granted. A further stipulation was that the purchase price of the site would have to be raised locally. The proposal was accepted on these conditions. In a further letter the following week Bagot concluded by assuring the resident commissioner that the model school in Newry would be 'a temple to liberty and conscience'.<sup>3</sup> Legal problems with the preferred site in Catherine Street were overcome, and, on the advice of Head Inspector Thomas Robertson<sup>4</sup>, the project was sanctioned by the Sub-Committee. The contract price which amounted to almost £2,500, exceeded the expected cost of each individual school by more than a factor of three. Worse was to follow. A large over-run in the cost of furnishing and 'fitting up', along with the sanctioning of extra work saw the final price exceeding the contract price by eighty-seven per cent.<sup>5</sup> The following description of the school complex, included in the 1849 *Report*, gives not only the scale and standard which the commissioners believed befitted a district model school, but strongly indicates that economy was not a major consideration.

It was designed for the accommodation of 250 or 280 children, in three separate departments, and of eight pupil-teachers, who are to be supported at the public expense, and to reside on the premises, under the care and superintendence of the Headmaster. On the left of the hall, as you enter the house, are the dining-room, the stair-case leading to the sleeping apartments, and the entrance to the kitchen, scullery, pantry, and servant's room. To the right is a lobby by which access is had to the pupil-teachers' study-room, to the Headmaster's sitting apartment, and to the gallery-room, which serves the two-fold purpose of a class-room for collective lessons, and of a separate

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<sup>2</sup>Powis, vii, 140.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas Jaffray Robertson was the Board's first head inspector. He was appointed in July, 1845, but left the service just two years later in June, 1847. What little is known of his personal life is gleaned from the evidence he gave to the 1837 Select Lords Committee. For a brief biographical note see Ó hÉideáin, *National school inspection*, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 7 Feb. 1850.

apartment for Religious Instruction. A continuation of the lobby leads to the infants' school, the girls' school, and the boys' school, the latter(sic) of which can also be reached through the gallery-room.

The upper story contains two rooms for the use of the Headmaster, and a dormitory, divided by wooden partitions into eight small compartments, each of which forms a distinct room, and is allotted to one of the pupil-teachers. These sleeping rooms are arranged on either side of the dormitory, leaving a central passage from which is entered by a separate door. The partitions do not extend to the ceiling; every room has its window; and adequate provision has been made for ventilation. Adjoining the dormitory is the wash-room for the pupil teachers.

The school-rooms are well proportioned, lofty, and lightsome: they are provided with a sufficient supply of the usual apparatus, and have annexed to them closets for caps, bonnets and cloaks, and good-sized playgrounds in which swing-poles and parallel bars have been erected.

On the whole, the general plan of the house seems to have been well considered, and has been found to suit the purposes for which it was intended. At the same time, the elegant architectural outline of the building, the substantial nature of the work, and the careful execution of all the parts, reflect great credit on the architect who designed and raised this structure.<sup>6</sup>

The school opened on 15 May 1849. While 237 applied for admission, attendance was deliberately limited to 119 pupils for the first few weeks 'to give the teachers a fair opportunity of disciplining their pupils, and of adapting themselves to the exigencies of their schools'.<sup>7</sup> By the following March, there were 319 children on the rolls. The children of all but the gentry and professional class were well represented. The head inspector, Edward Butler, was satisfied there was 'no reluctance on the part of the better class of artisans to allow their children to frequent the same school with those of the poorer order'. Those paying 1d per week amounted to sixty-one per cent; twenty-nine per cent paid the intermediate rate of 2s 6d; and twelve per cent the high rate of 5s. Interestingly, Butler informed the commissioners that had not a quota system been in operation, all the places could have been taken by children whose parents were levied at the higher rates.<sup>8</sup> A source of even greater satisfaction was the interest taken in the institution by clergymen of all denominations. They were not content to lend just moral support, but regularly involved themselves in imparting religious instruction to the children of their respective faiths. They were, as this suggests, and as testified by letter, happy with the arrangements in that respect. Even Bishop Blake was 'accustomed to attend there on Fridays ... and to superintend it [religious instruction] for myself'. Overall, he felt

a lively interest in the welfare of that Institution, and more especially in supporting its character for rational and truly Christian liberality, equally removed from bigotry and indifference...<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, p.184.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p.186.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p.188.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p.207.

The clear enthusiasm of the various clergymen for the institution was mirrored in the support of the laity of the different denominations. Roman Catholics formed fifty-two per cent of those on rolls, members of the Established Church, twenty-three per cent, and Presbyterians, twenty-five per cent.<sup>10</sup> The commissioners' faith in Newry as a place where united education would succeed was not misplaced. One should bear in mind, though, that in deference to the sensibilities of the Roman Catholic bishop, it was not insisted upon that Roman Catholic children would use Whately's books. This arrangement, to which Butler was a party, undoubtedly enhanced the prospects of success.

Ballymena, Coleraine, and Dunmanway were promoted as possible locations for district model schools by the local superintendents. In the case of Ballymena, Robertson suggested that 'no better place could be chosen', considering that it was 'a populous commercial town' centrally located in a densely populated district. His letter was referred to the superintendent of the district, William McCreedy, for a more detailed report. He confirmed that a suitable site was on offer from Sir Robert Shafto Adair, who resided mostly in London, and that John Dickey - the grantor's agent, two Presbyterian ministers and the Roman Catholic parish priest were 'prepared to give [the plan] every support in their power'. On the basis of this, Ballymena was approved as a location for a district model school on 24 December 1846.<sup>11</sup> As with Newry, the cost over-run was substantial. The final cost was sixty-two per cent greater than the contract price of £2,684. The Board's response was to ask Charles Lanyon, the county surveyor [and designer of Queen's College, Belfast] to investigate. His findings would appear to have been favourable to the contractor.<sup>12</sup> In the spring of 1849, as opening day approached, the Special Committee presented for approval detailed regulations governing the running of Ballymena and Newry District Model Schools. The opening in May 1849 was attended by Alexander Macdonnell, who confidently reported to the Board that the school was 'likely to meet with the support of the various denominations'.<sup>13</sup> The *Report* of the following year confirmed this assertion. At a meeting called by William Gibson, J.P., resolutions, effusive in tone, regarding the first year of the school's operation, moved by the Reverend H.J. Dobbin, and seconded by the Reverend John Lynch, 'were passed with acclamation'.<sup>14</sup> Further evidence of inter-denominational harmony was provided in the figures relating to enrolment. William McCreedy, (now a head inspector), informed the commissioners that, while Presbyterians formed the majority of

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p.190.

<sup>11</sup>Quotations are from correspondence relating to Ballymena District Model School contained in *Powis*, vii, 101-2.

<sup>12</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 14 Feb., 30 May 1850.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 12 May 1849.

<sup>14</sup>*Powis*, vii, 102

the population within the locality, '[the schools] are attended by children of all the religious denominations ...'. Of the 225 pupils enrolled in May 1850, Presbyterians accounted for sixty per cent, Roman Catholics twenty-three per cent, and Episcopalians seventeen per cent. Clergymen of the three principal denominations were reported as attending every Saturday 'to give special doctrinal instruction'.<sup>15</sup> No special arrangements were made regarding Whately's *Scripture Extracts* and *Christian Evidences*. In the not too distant future this was to cause the parish priest, Fr John Lynch, to withdraw his co-operation. In the meantime, however, the Board felt vindicated in its choice of Ballymena. The willingness of the clergy of the principal churches to back the venture and to become involved in the delivery of religious instruction assured its success as a centre of united education. The commissioners were further heartened by the inspector's report that 'children from almost all the varied ranks or grades of society' were enrolled. While McCreedy claimed that the support of the middle classes was not as impressive as in Newry, the figures he provided do not support this contention. Fifty-six per cent of pupils paid at the lowest rate, thirty-two per cent and twelve per cent at the intermediate and higher rates, respectively<sup>16</sup>

The most notable feature concerning the selection of Coleraine as a location for a district model school was the lack of consultation with the clergymen of the various denominations. Following initial inquiries by H.P. Clarke, the district inspector, in January 1846, the Honourable Company of Clothworkers of London offered a site at a nominal rent. The resident commissioner was also the recipient of a private communication from A. Barklie, esquire of Coleraine, strongly recommending that the offer be availed of.<sup>17</sup> The subsequent investigation by Robertson referred to the members of the Clothworkers Company as those 'persons most interested in the establishment of the proposed school'. This body, he reported, was already endowing with small annual sums a number of schools in the locality - 'many of which are National'. Regarding the location of the school, he suggested that it be sited on the western bank of the Bann where about 3,000 of the 7,000 population lived. Two factors appear to have influenced him in his choice. A large free school with a teacher residence operated on the eastern side. This school received an annual endowment of £150 from the Irish Society. On the western side he believed there was 'a much greater proportion ... of a grade likely to attend a National school'. Without being specific, he stated that he was under the impression that the establishment of a district model school 'will meet with the approval of most of the parties'. It is fair to infer that while none of the clergy showed enthusiasm for the project, none offered active opposition. On the basis of the head inspector's assessment, a district model school for Coleraine was approved in July

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<sup>15</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, p. 234.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>17</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 25 Feb. 1846.

1846.<sup>18</sup> It opened in April 1850. The lengthy period between sanction and opening can be explained by an unfavourable report by Darley on the original site. This required the Board to seek an alternative.

It is apparent from the 1851 *Report* that the school met with cross- denominational approval. McCreedy reported on the presence of 'a large and respectable assemblage of visitors, both lay and clerical' at the first Annual Examination. However, an analysis of enrolment by religious denomination would suggest that the school did not long maintain its popularity among the Roman Catholic population. At the end of August 1851, of the 176 on rolls sixty-six per cent were Presbyterian, twenty per cent Episcopalian, and only fourteen per cent Roman Catholic. Compared with the previous year, Roman Catholic enrolment had fallen by a third. Of interest also are the statistics for school fees. The figure of fifty per cent at the lowest rate demanded by regulation was not met, reaching just forty-four per cent. That for the highest rate - sixteen per cent - was greater than either Newry or Ballymena.<sup>19</sup> It is reasonable to suppose that this was accounted for by a preponderance of Roman Catholics among the town's poorer classes.

Unlike Coleraine, Robertson's recommendation that Dunmanway be selected as a location for a district model school had the unequivocal backing of the Roman Catholic clergyman, James Doheny, P.P., and of his successor, John Kelleher. Doheny's support was unwavering even when in dispute with the Board over its choice of site.<sup>20</sup> This may partly reflect the economic situation of the area as, in the words of head inspector Kavanagh:

Dunmanway is in the poorest and most backward of the seven localities in which District Model Schools are in operation ... The peasantry are very simple and primitive ... Irish is the universal language of all classes.

With little wealth, the educational opportunities open to the Roman Catholic majority of the area were limited. A mixed national school was 'poorly conducted and quite as poorly attended'. A small select school for girls was attended by 'the few able to pay moderate school fees', while a number boys and girls attended an 'adventure school'. Significantly, Kavanagh believed that the advances made by the Bandon-based Church Education Society during the 'recent distress' had the effect of attaching the Roman Catholic clergy and their flocks to the national system where 'the children might receive a good secular education, and at the same time be afforded an opportunity for religious instruction according to their own views and wishes'.<sup>21</sup> This perceived attachment,

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<sup>18</sup> Powis, vii, 112-3.

<sup>19</sup> C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, p. 130.

<sup>20</sup> Doheny had a personal interest in one of the sites rejected by the Board. See Powis, vii, 115-18, correspondence relating to Dunmanway site.

<sup>21</sup> C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, p. 149.

along with the open support of the parish priest, quite probably influenced the superintendent of the district in recommending Dunmanway, when Bandon, a more prosperous and more religiously mixed town, would, in more favourable circumstances, have been the obvious choice.

There is no evidence that the Protestant clergyman was ever consulted on the selection of Dunmanway, nor is there any indication that active opposition was offered. The first reference to the attitude adopted by the Protestant clergy is contained in the report of Head Inspector James Patten on the school opening in August 1849. In this, he stated that the clergy, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, accepted an invitation to attend a meeting in the school house at which times for religious instruction were arranged. By the close of the first month of the school's operation it became clear that the school was poorly supported by the Protestant community - of the 164 in attendance a mere seven were Protestants. Patten attributed this to two related factors. Firstly, the attitude of the clergy had changed from passive toleration to active opposition. More importantly, he held that the attraction of the Church Education Society school, with an average attendance of about 80 Protestant children, was the principal cause.<sup>22</sup> By 1851, Kavanagh, while acknowledging the disadvantage at which the school was put by the absence of Protestant clergymen, believed that gradually the confidence of the Protestant parents was being won over. An increase in the number of Protestant children in attendance to twenty - 'children of the most respectable Protestants in the town and neighbourhood' - confirmed his assertion.

Kavanagh's account, in evidence to the 1854 Inquiry, of the arrangements made with the various clergy for religious instruction is at variance with that of Patten in the 1849 *Report*. As Kavanagh recalled, two separate meetings were held in the schoolhouse prior to its opening. The first meeting took place between Kavanagh and Patten and a number of Protestant clergymen who arrived un-announced. The Inspectors were left in no doubt as to the various objections the clergymen had to 'the rules, books and arrangements' of the national system. The meeting referred to by Patten had been arranged by him for the Friday before opening. This was attended by just two of the four Protestant clergymen who attended the earlier meeting. They were joined by the two Roman Catholic clergymen of the parish. While arrangements for separate religious instruction were agreed, Kavanagh distinctly understood that the Protestant clergymen committed themselves to nothing. At best, they left the meeting promising to keep the matter 'under consideration'. Unlike Patten, Kavanagh never believed that the Protestant clergy's attitude could be described as favourable, and, thus, was not surprised when hostility was shown. Besides the effect their opposition had on the attendance of Protestant

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<sup>22</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, pp 283-4.



children, it also, according to Kavanagh, led to the resignation of a Protestant pupil-teacher, and, under these exceptional circumstances, the commissioners 'were necessitated to send to Antrim ... for the son of a Protestant schoolmaster, who would be independent of local influence ...'.<sup>23</sup>

In the case of Dunmanway, a less than thorough initial inquiry, or possibly a reluctance to alert potential opposition to the proposed development, resulted in an 'official' absence of concern over the manner in which the operation of a district model school would be received by the leaders of the minority religion in the area. Whether intentional or otherwise, the approach of the Board and its officers appears to have worked. While the school continued to be shunned by the Protestant clergy, the attendance of children of that faith by the mid-1850s was reported to be in proportion to their number among the local population.<sup>24</sup> Dunmanway was limited to accommodating four, rather than eight, pupil-teachers. This was due to the inclusion of an agricultural department which provided boarding for a further four pupils.

In contrast to Dunmanway, the application for a district model school for Trim enjoyed the unswerving support of both the rector, Richard Butler, and the parish priest, John O'Connell. Consequently, there was never any doubt that, if approved, it would enjoy the support of all. The joint correspondents, writing on behalf of the 'Scarcity Committee' in April 1846, would seem to have been prompted to advocate the establishment of a district model school in Trim with the hope of '[devising] some useful works, which will both give employment to the poor, and will redound to the benefit of the public'. The application was favourably reported on by Head Inspector Butler, and the proposed site - part of the commons of Trim belonging to the town commissioners - was available at a nominal rent. Notwithstanding the genuine co-operation between the rector and the parish priest, the project came perilously close to being abandoned. Satisfactory title to the site, 'held by the late Corporation from time immemorial,' could not be produced. There followed extensive correspondence between the joint applicants and the Board, in which ultimately the offices of the lord lieutenant and the Treasury were involved. In the absence of a conclusive solution to the problem, and taking into account the unflagging enthusiasm of the Corporation for the project, the Board declared itself willing to accept an interim lease of seventy-five years, on the understanding that the borough commissioners of Trim would apply to the Treasury for permission to grant a lease in perpetuity.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Lords' Inquiry ... 1854*, pp 358-61.

<sup>24</sup> C.N.E.I., *Twenty-first report ... 1855*, p. 210.

<sup>25</sup> *Powis*, vii, 159-64.

On the basis of this temporary arrangement the project was proceeded with. The original proposal had included provision for a model farm. This was abandoned in favour of a three department literary school with an infirmary, a teacher's residence, and servant's room attached. The contract was awarded, after tender, to local contractor Richard Davis. The final cost exceeded the estimate of £3,271 by almost fifty per cent.

The school, similar in design to that of Newry, was opened by the resident commissioner on 7 May 1850, at a ceremony attended by 'some of the Protestant and Roman Catholic clergymen of the surrounding parishes and a few of the gentry'. So popular was the school that the attendance of 222, 'larger than it was at first intended to admit ...', rendered the subsequent organisation of the schools more difficult and tedious'.<sup>26</sup> It quickly became apparent that many of the children of the poorer classes could not afford even the 1*d.* per week. William Newell, then a district inspector, reported that Trim was not a wealthy town and had a smaller middle-class than would generally be found in Irish towns of a similar size. Reluctantly, the commissioners agreed under certain well-defined circumstances to waive even the lowest rate. By 1853, 15 per cent of the pupils were admitted gratuitously, while 68 per cent paid the minimum rate.<sup>27</sup> There is no record of similar arrangements in any of the other model schools.

Not surprisingly, the two clergymen were described as paying 'unremitting attention' to the children of their respective persuasions. Protestants of the Established Church were in a very small minority - just eight per cent of the total. This was to be expected in a town where the vast majority was reported as being Roman Catholic. The existence of a school for Protestants, pre-dating the establishment of the model school, was also a contributory factor.<sup>28</sup>

The initiative for the establishment of district model schools in both Bailieborough and Clonmel was taken by landed laymen. In the case of each, regard was taken of the sensibilities of influential Roman Catholic clergy in the siting of the schools. While the attitude of the clergymen of the Established Church was less than enthusiastic, it was not thought likely that they would actively oppose the plans. In the county of Cavan interest in having a district model school was expressed in three locations, the town of Cavan itself, Virginia, and Bailieborough. In the last named town a recently erected schoolhouse was offered along with an adjoining plot of ground. The offer of a site in Virginia by Lord Headfort, in December, 1846, does not appear to have been seriously

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<sup>26</sup>*Eighteenth report ... 1851*, p. 84.

<sup>27</sup>*Twentieth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland, 1853* (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Twentieth report ... 1853*), App. G., p. 39.

<sup>28</sup>C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, p. 90.

entertained. In Cavan town three sites were investigated, and were for various reasons disregarded by Head Inspector Butler. Perhaps his most telling comment, and that which ultimately denied the town a district model school, was that relating to the Roman Catholic bishop, Dr. James Browne.<sup>29</sup> Butler believed him to be favourable to the erection of a district model school in Cavan, but was 'apprehensive lest it should interfere with the school which he [had] lately built'. This school, which the inspector believed was intended to cater for up to 400 children, was at that stage attended by little more than 100.<sup>30</sup> Even an apparent change of heart on the part of the bishop, when he and Lord Farnham amongst others presented a memorial in September 1846 requesting that a district model school be erected in Cavan rather than Bailieborough, was not sufficient to sway the commissioners. A final effort was made to secure a district model school for Cavan town in 1854. It was dismissed with the stock excuse of the time - 'in future the district model schools shall be erected in very large and populous towns or contiguous thereto.'<sup>31</sup> Clearly, Cavan did not qualify.<sup>32</sup>

In the meantime, investigations by both head inspectors - Butler and Kavanagh - indicated that the parish priest and the two Presbyterian ministers were firmly behind the Bailieborough application that had been submitted in March 1846 by John Young, the local landlord and member of parliament. Indeed, when a newspaper report suggested that Virginia might be preferred to Bailieborough, the Reverend Patrick White, in his individual capacity, and not, he would have the commissioners believe, 'as Moderator of the Synod of Dublin', pressed the claims of Bailieborough. It, he assured the Board, was a much more prosperous town than Virginia. Regarding its denominational composition, he informed them that upwards of 1,000 Episcopalians resided in the parish, 3,600 Presbyterians, and 5,000 Catholics: 'If mixed education be the object of the Board, Bailieborough is the proper site.'<sup>33</sup> Kavanagh concurred. While he reported that the rector was not favourable, he believed that Young's influence 'would attract marked attention to the school, and mitigate the opposition which it might otherwise have to encounter'.<sup>34</sup>

Difficulties of a practical nature were overlooked rather than overcome. The schoolhouse offered by Young, even though it had been recently built by him at a cost of

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<sup>29</sup>For an account of Browne's life and ministry see Donal Kerr, 'James Browne Bishop of Kilmore 1829-65', *Breifne - Journal of Cumann Seanchas Bhreifne*, vi, no. 22 (1984), pp 109-153. For his attitude towards Bailieborough District Model School see p. 144.

<sup>30</sup>*Powis*, vii, 99.

<sup>31</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 10, 17 Sept. 1846, 8 Oct. 1846, 24 Feb. 1854.

<sup>32</sup>Robin Wylie, in *Ulster model schools* (Belfast, 1997), p. 4, refers to a tradition which suggests that the intense competition over the location of the district model school was due to a great rivalry existing between the Farnhams of Cavan and Youngs of Bailieborough.

<sup>33</sup>*Powis*, vii, 98.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p.100.

£600, was deemed unsuitable. However, when he offered additional land on the outskirts of the town for a model farm, it was decided that the existing schoolhouse would serve as the residence for the headmaster and the pupil teachers.<sup>35</sup> This plan does not appear to have been effected. The schoolhouse, after extensive restructuring, served as the model school, while the headmaster and his pupil-teachers resided at the model farm - which was the arrangement applied also at Kilkenny, Limerick, and Belfast.

As it transpired, Bailieborough, from the point of view of united education, exceeded expectations. The Reverend Beresford, not reported as being favourable, had been replaced by Reverend Fitzpatrick. According to the 1850 *Report* he, and on occasion his son, the curate, along with the Roman Catholic priests and Presbyterian ministers attended at regular times for religious instruction. Head Inspector James Patten commented on the 'harmony, good-will, and co-operation which [subsisted] among the clergymen of the different denominations'. Similar feelings towards the school existed among the laity. Of the 116 children on the rolls, those of the Established Church accounted for twenty-six per cent, Roman Catholics for fifty-nine per cent, and Presbyterians for fifteen per cent, 'nearly,' Patten informed the commissioners, '[reflecting the] proportion in which they exist in the locality'.<sup>36</sup>

An adroit approach was required in the case of the Clonmel application. The initiative had been taken by John Bagwell, who held large property interests within the town. Early investigations by Robertson indicated that the proposed establishment would meet with a mixed reception from the Roman Catholic priests of the two parishes within which the town lay. John Baldwin, parish priest of St. Mary's, was reported as being 'decidedly favourable', while Michael Bourke, parish priest of SS. Peter and Paul, the parish in which the recommended site lay, was known to be hostile. He was already manager of a number of schools not connected with the National Board. Indeed, his particular objection to model schools had to do with the exclusive claim to management by the commissioners. He was the first to raise this point. The various Protestant clergy were reported as favourable. The attitude of the lay community, as expressed by the Mayor, Charles Bianconi, was also strongly supportive. While convinced that the model school for the district should be located in Clonmel, Robertson, worried about the impact of Fr Bourke's attitude and would go no further than to state guardedly that 'a really well conducted district model school would in all probability eventually command the attendance to render it perfectly effective'.<sup>37</sup> In light of this report a site was sought in Baldwin's parish, with Quinlan, the district inspector, of the opinion that should

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>36</sup>*Seventeenth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland, 1850* (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Seventeenth report ... 1850*), p. 215.

<sup>37</sup>*Powis*, vii, 110-1.

Bourke interfere he would then be in breach of church discipline.<sup>38</sup> Before arriving at a decision the Board thought it expedient to direct Robertson, in March 1847, to furnish a further report. He expressed himself pleased with the site now on offer, and while Fr Bourke was expected to oppose the proposed school, many in the town were described as 'decidedly favourable'. The Protestant rector, J.B. Palliser, though a supporter of the Church Education Society, was stated as being of the opinion that the school would 'be productive of great benefit to the town'. Significantly, the head inspector informed the Board that, with the siting of the school in St. Mary's, he did not think Fr Bourke's 'presumed hostility of sufficient importance to induce the commissioners to reject the proposal.' He now averred that 'no unfavourable circumstances will arise to delay the final arrangement'. On the strength of this buoyant assessment, sanction was given.<sup>39</sup>

The report on the visit to Clonmel, more than two years later, by head inspectors Kavanagh and Patten, as the opening day approached, gave the commissioners another opportunity to gauge the level of enthusiasm for united education. Some significant shifts of opinion were noted. As before, 'assurances of approbation and support' were received from Baldwin, and the Presbyterian and Unitarian ministers. Local notables, members of the Corporation, and 'the professional and mercantile classes' were steadfastly loyal. Of most note, was the reported mellowing of the attitude of Fr Michael Bourke. This, if borne out, had potentially important implications for the model school. While he should prefer members of his flock to attend 'the large and efficient schools of his own, conducted under his own management, and by persons of the religious orders,' he would not object to those parents 'who thought fit to avail themselves of any advantages afforded in the Model Schools'. This encouraging news was somewhat offset by Palliser's expression of 'conscientious objections to some of the principles of the National system'. Having recently signed a petition of the Church Education Society, and participated in the management of three of its schools, 'he declined giving any countenance or support to the Model Schools'. While he promised not to give any 'active opposition', he did not see how he could involve himself in religious instruction. This last point he qualified by stating that should those of his faith attend in large numbers he would further consider his position.<sup>40</sup>

A meeting preceding the opening of the school on 30 July 1849, was attended by both parish priests and the Presbyterian and Dissenting ministers, at which the arrangements for religious instruction were agreed. Staff appointments attempted to reflect the interests of the various denominations. By January 1850, the entire staff consisted of two Roman Catholic and one Presbyterian teacher, six Roman Catholic and two

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p.101.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p.111.

<sup>40</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, p. 258.

Protestant pupil-teachers, three Roman Catholic and one Protestant monitress, and a Roman Catholic workmistress.

Kavanagh noted that all social grades in the town were represented in the school and that all blended well together with a distinct absence of those differences 'which might be expected to arise from the social and pecuniary inequalities of the parents'. Despite the higher than expected appeal of the school to the middle classes - twenty-eight per cent and thirty-seven per cent paid the school fee respectively at the highest and intermediate rates - he held that its character was unaffected. It still afforded 'the soundest and most practical English and mathematical education' to those for whom it was intended - 'the children of labourers, operative mechanics, farmers, clerks and small traders'. The desire of these classes for education and the willingness with which they paid for it, according to Kavanagh, evinced their emergence 'from the depression in spirit and resources into which successive years of famine had sunk them'.<sup>41</sup> The combination of social classes he believed was surpassed only by that of the different creeds. The bulk of the pupils (seventy-four per cent) were registered as Roman Catholics. Of the Protestant denominations, those of the Established Church accounted for nineteen per cent of the total student body. While this may not have pleased the Reverend Palliser, as he had intimated, he re-considered his position and now attended for religious instruction. Dr Bourke did not attend but Fr John Baldwin was assisted in his task by members of the Sisters of Charity.<sup>42</sup>

Despite early misgivings, all involved in the promotion of Clonmel as a location suitable for a district model school could now echo Kavanagh's claim - 'united education has succeeded ... to a degree never before witnessed in three of the four provinces of Ireland'. What could not be publicly revealed at that stage was the action taken by Kavanagh at the time of the school opening. This, he believed, was imperative for the schools very survival. In his evidence to the 1854 *Inquiry* he succinctly described the dilemma facing him:

In calling upon the Reverend Mr Baldwin ... he asked what books were to be used; and I told him we should use all those published or sanctioned by the Board ... On hearing this, a conversation ensued, in which Mr Baldwin expressed strong objection to the use of the *Scripture Extracts* and the *Christian Evidences*. In a week or two subsequent to this interview, we gave notice that we were ready to receive the names of applicants for admission as pupils; and, owing to the absence of the head master, I undertook the duty of receiving the parents applying for admission for their children ... This afforded me particular opportunity of knowing the feelings of the parents ... and, so far as I can recollect, with scarcely an exception, all the Roman Catholic applicants stated that they would not send their children to the schools unless their parish priests gave their full and

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 261.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 263.

entire approbation to the books and to all the arrangements of the school which might bear upon their religion.<sup>43</sup>

Clearly, there was a willingness on the part of some members of the Board and a number of its officers to circumvent their own regulations in an effort to popularise the district model schools, while at the same time maintaining the fundamental principle of united secular education. This was similar in thrust to the 'New Ross Plan' of the Kildare Place Society era. In the context of the centralising control, the essence of ultramontanist, which the Cullen episcopacy was already beginning gradually to exert, this was never likely to be more than a temporising measure. The growing threat, appropriately, can first be detected in the processing of the ill-fated Drogheda application.

### ***5.2 Gathering opposition***

In the suppressed section of his head inspector's report for 1851, J.W. Kavanagh noted that there were two distinct groups opposed to the Board's district model schools - those opposed to mixed or united education, and those at least willing to tolerate it but antagonistic to the special management arrangements. The attitude of this latter group he believed to be 'seeming, and not sincere', predicting that in time it would be indistinguishable from the first.<sup>44</sup> An examination of the records bearing on the establishment of the second group of district model schools would strongly suggest that Kavanagh's observation was prescient.

The original Drogheda application was presented in April, 1846 when a deputation that included Archbishop Crolly and the Mayor waited upon the commissioners. The initial response was favourable.<sup>45</sup> However, over the course of 1847 and 1848 none of the sites suggested proved suitable. For a critical period the application was in abeyance. When resurrected under the auspices of the directors of the Drogheda Mechanics Institute in December 1850, prospects were decidedly less auspicious. Although informed that a site could be procured, the Board, now keenly conscious of the finite nature of its finances, could give no pledge that a district model school would ultimately be established. In the investigation carried out by the Board, the only site available was found to be one in the grounds of the late Archbishop Crolly's residence. It was deemed unsuitable. Ironically, this property had been alienated from the Church by the very provisions of the Charitable Donations and Bequests Act. Crolly, along with Murray,

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<sup>43</sup>*Lords' Inquiry ... 1854*, p. 316.

<sup>44</sup>*Powis*, iv, *App. No. 10*, p. 1306.

<sup>45</sup>The following are the entries in the *M.C.N.E.I.* relating to the Drogheda application:-  
23 Apr., 7, 14 May, 4, 11 June, 1846, 28 Oct. 1847, 24 Feb., 18 May, 8 June 1848, 12 Dec. 1850; 13, 20 Feb. 1851, 28 Jan. 1853.

and Cornelius Denvir, Bishop of Down and Connor, were commissioners on the Board charged with implementing it.

The Board's unwillingness to proceed with the provision of a model school in Drogheda has commonly been attributed to the opposition of Archbishop Cullen. This claim was first made by Kavanagh in his popular polemic *The Catholic Case Stated...* and repeated by him in evidence to the Powis Commission. In its *Report* it was adopted unquestioningly by Assistant Commissioners Cowie and Stokes.<sup>46</sup> Thenceforward it has been accepted uncritically. A re-evaluation of the evidence favours a more cautious assessment. Kavanagh's assertion is based on a reply penned by Cullen to a letter from Alderman Boylan of Drogheda Corporation in August 1851. Boylan apparently sought the archbishop's views on mixed education in general, and on its operation in model schools in particular. Such was the self-perceived cogency of his argument against united education that the Primate believed it was unnecessary

to make any observation about the model school which has been the principal occasion of the correspondence. The object of such establishments appears to be the development of mixed education. Protestant, Presbyterian and Catholic teachers are to be mixed in them and children of every denomination are invited to attend them and thus a mixture is compounded that is anything rather than Catholic. Neither the Catholic clergy nor any other Catholic body has any control over the appointment or removal of masters or mistresses or over their teaching in the schools. The whole system tends to inspire children with the absurd idea that all religions are equally good and is thus hostile to truth which is one and exclusive in its nature.<sup>47</sup>

Kavanagh further claimed in evidence to the Powis Commission that following the receipt of the reply, Drogheda Corporation 'immediately petitioned the Board not to carry out the scheme, and it was not attempted'.<sup>48</sup>

The *Minutes* of the commissioners tend, at least, to indicate that the triumph was not as emphatic as claimed. The letter to Boylan comes from a period when there is no documentary evidence amongst the Board's records to suggest that they were contemplating anew a district model school for Drogheda. This conclusion is reinforced by the absence of a petition on record to the Board for its abandonment. At best, it can be inferred that it was Drogheda Corporation which was toying with the idea of an application, and that it was Cullen's pressure on them which led to the idea being dropped. Cullen himself, in a letter to Monsignor Barnabo, secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, was also of the belief that he was instrumental in setting the Board's intentions at naught.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>[J.W. Kavanagh], *The Catholic case stated; or principles, working, and results of the system of national education with suggestions for the settlement of the education question*, (Dublin, 1859), p. 377.

<sup>47</sup>Quoted in Peadar MacSuibhne, *Paul Cullen and his contemporaries* (Naas, 1965), ii, 88.

<sup>48</sup>*Powis*, iii, 502. The comments of Cowie and Stokes are to be found in *Powis*, i, pt. 2, 737.

<sup>49</sup>MacSuibhne, *Paul Cullen*, iii, p. 107.



Kavanagh's interpretation of the Drogheda affair led him to believe that it marked the commencement of episcopal opposition to the Board's district model schools, with Bishop Nicholas Foran of Waterford and Lismore the first to follow suit. Recent research would suggest that Foran resisted and resented Cullen's interference within the episcopal province of Cashel, and three years after the Synod of Thurles he had still not enforced its statutes.<sup>50</sup> While at first he supported the demand for a district model school in Waterford, he did, for reasons that are not clear, an about-face. Cullen was confident of Foran's support but was increasingly concerned at the latitudinarian attitude of some of the Irish bishops on the broad education question and strove to achieve a united front. He accused them; in early 1852, particularly with regard to the model schools, of unwillingness to give the least bit of help to promote his Catholic University, while 'warmly exert[ing] themselves to ensure the success of these [model] schools ... In other places [besides Drogheda and Waterford] the bishops', he claimed, 'are encouraging the plan ...'.<sup>51</sup> Throughout the mid-1850s Cullen consolidated his grip on the hierarchy. By 1858 there was unanimity on the attitude towards the national system, even if on other matters he could not command the support of MacHale and some of his suffragans.<sup>52</sup> Communications with Rome could now emphatically 'condemn what are called Model Schools,' giving as their reasons the lack of episcopal involvement in management and the absence of control over the appointment of teachers and the books used. Episcopal opposition 'to their further extension in the country' was declared.<sup>53</sup> It was within this period of change that the second tranche of district model schools was delivered.

Meanwhile, of the second group of six district model schools, only one, at Belfast, was located in Ulster. This must be seen as a move to redress the imbalance in location. Of the first seven, four were erected in the northern province. As early as January, 1849 the Board showed its awareness of the problem. An application for a district model school on the Bath Estate in Co. Monaghan was turned down on the grounds that

the majority of those already in the progress of erection are situated in the northern counties. The Commissioners therefore cannot with justice to the other parts of the country accede to this application.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Emmet Larkin, *The making of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1850-1860* (Chapel Hill - University of North Carolina Press, 1980), p. 216

<sup>51</sup>Letter to Barnabo, 16 February, 1862, quoted in MacSuibhne, *Paul Cullen*, iii, 108.

<sup>52</sup>The manner in which Cullen gained control during the 1850s is engagingly investigated by Larkin, *The making of the Roman Catholic Church*, passim.

<sup>53</sup>MacSuibhne, *Paul Cullen*, iii, 254-6.

<sup>54</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 11 Jan. 1849.

Other Ulster applications during this second phase also failed to find favour, though three of them were later the locations of minor model schools.<sup>55</sup> Even the support of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Raphoe, Patrick McGettigan, for the Letterkenny application, failed to entice the commissioners.

Apart from an understandable need to give a greater geographical spread to the scheme, it is again difficult to identify why certain locations were chosen. The various factors identified in connection with the earlier decisions were still relevant, and, again, evidence of inter-denominational support, or at least the absence of organised active opposition, was important.

The Athy application in 1848 was timely in that only one district model school had been sanctioned in Leinster at that stage. There was no doubt that the project would be fully supported by both the Duke of Leinster and the Marquess of Kildare. It was situated in the Dublin Archdiocese, and Murray and Whately were both still active commissioners. There is no suggestion in the records of local denominational discord. Under such favourable circumstances it is not surprising that arrangements proceeded smoothly, and the school was opened in August 1852. In the meantime, additional land had been taken for a model farm. Unlike Dunmanway and Bailieborough an infant department was also included.

Two developments prior to the opening indicated that the ostensible support for the school masked a degree of inter-denominational suspicion at local level. The rector, F.J. French, advised the Board, in January 1852, that in appointing a staff due regard should be given to the selection of Protestant teachers 'as will inspire the parishioners of that persuasion with confidence that the Institute is intended for their benefit as well as that for Roman Catholics'. A second letter from French, along with one in the same vein from Whately, were sent to the commissioners in May and June.<sup>56</sup> The reply to all was that they would receive 'due consideration'. At the time of the opening of the school, of the four teachers, one was of the Established Church, the other three were Roman Catholics. This fairly reflected the denominational composition of the children on the school roll. Difficulty was encountered at this stage in procuring the appointment of a suitable candidate of the Established Church as a pupil-teacher to join the three Roman Catholics already selected.<sup>57</sup> In this instance, the anxieties of the Established Church appear to have been mollified as its clergy were well represented at the official opening. The same could not be said of the Roman Catholic Church. Notable by their absence

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 24 Feb. 1854 - Cavan; 19 Oct. 1860 - Dungannon; 13 Mar. 1858 - Letterkenny; 26 Aug. 1853 - Monaghan; 1 July 1853 - Newtownstewart; 29 Dec. 1855 - Omagh; 28 Mar. 1862 - Strabane.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 30 Jan., 28 May, 4 June 1852.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 17 Sept. 1852

were its clergymen. More ominous still was mention in the annual report of the poor attendance at the female school, where the numbers did not warrant the appointment of monitorial staff.<sup>58</sup> This was due to the arrival of Mercy nuns in December 1852. In March 1853, the manager of Athy Female N.S. applied to the Board for a grant towards 'salary ... at the rate applied to such [convent] schools'. In coming to a decision the Board did express concern at 'the probable effect which this school, as now conducted, would have upon attendance of females at the District Model School...'<sup>59</sup> While the Board was accused from time to time by its detractors of opening model schools in direct opposition to those under religious management, in cases such as this, its supporters were concerned that its actions tended to undermine its own prospects, with the Convent and Christian Brother Schools acting as a type of 'Trojan Horse'. In Athy, by the end of this phase of model school erection, these fears were being realised. The Inspector reported in July, 1857 that Archbishop Cullen

took occasion when preaching a sermon here ... in aid of funds to build a new school for the Sisters of Mercy in this town, to denounce the Model School, directing the people not to send their children etc., and since then the nuns themselves, **the recipients of aid from the Commissioners** have in several cases gone to the houses of the poor persons who had their children coming to the schools, and endeavoured by every means in their power to induce them to withdraw the children.<sup>60</sup>

In Galway the same undercurrent of sectarian tension does not appear to have been present. Here, the Sisters of Mercy, besides their teaching duties in their own schools, attended each day at the model school to give instruction in religion. Edward Butler was in no doubt that had they not shown this interest which 'tended to secure the confidence of the Catholic parents' the school 'would have utterly failed'.<sup>61</sup>

Galway had probably an even stronger case than Athy. Connacht, alone of all the provinces, was without a model school. The Queen's College established there had not attracted Roman Catholic opposition. The initial application in September, 1849, 'from the active and intelligent M.P. for Galway', Anthony O'Flaherty, impressed upon the commissioners 'the great anxiety' that existed 'amongst all classes in the locality for the establishment of such an institution'. A detailed report by Darley and Butler, following a visit to the city, concluded by informing the commissioners that 'local parties of all denominations ... expressed their readiness to co-operate with the Commissioners ...'.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>*Nineteenth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland, 1852* (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Nineteenth report ... 1852*), App. H, p.109

<sup>59</sup>*M. C.N.E.I.*, 18 Mar., 15 Apr., 1853.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, 31 July 1857, emphasis mine.

<sup>61</sup>*C.N.E.I., Nineteenth report ... 1852*. App. H, p. 202.

<sup>62</sup>*Powis*, vii, 126-7.

The evidence regarding Limerick also suggests that its identification as a suitable location was prompted by the commissioners' recognition of the need to avoid the charge that the scheme of district model schools was skewed towards Ulster. Encouraged by interest shown in the establishment of an 'Agricultural Seminary', the commissioners initiated the process in February of the following year. Having resolved to erect two model schools in 1851, and 'desirous that one be in Limerick', they contacted Bishop William Higgin of the Established Church, understanding him to be interested, to ask if he could point out suitable sites to the Board's officers. This quest encountered a number of difficulties. After exhaustive searches Kavanagh and Clarke, the district inspector, reported in July, 1851:

No site, ... can be obtained which would have anything like geographical or social centrality, and, in point of fact, the question resolves itself into school or no school, as if this site be not adopted, there is no probability that a better one can be obtained.<sup>63</sup>

Under these circumstances a site was recommended in an area where there were already a number of schools 'of a permanent character', attended by a total of 707 pupils. These included schools of the Sisters of Mercy and the Christian Brothers with a combined enrolment of 464 pupils. Also, on a site opposite the proposed model school, the Sisters of Charity intended building a convent, an orphanage, and a school for the poor, 'to which the nuns are bound by vow to devote themselves'. Furthermore, the rector of the adjoining parish of St. Patrick's informed Clarke that he believed the site to be 'most ineligible'.<sup>64</sup> Neither inspector saw these objections as threatening. They were of the view that there was an 'ample school population for all', and that in all probability the existing schools would 'rather derive strength than decay from the opening of the model school'. Moreover, both Higgin and Dr John Ryan, the Roman Catholic bishop, were well disposed. While the Protestant bishop admitted that his rector did not approve, he assured the inspectors that both the rector and curate would attend to give religious instruction 'under his lordship's direction'. The Reverend Wilson, the Presbyterian minister was believed to be willing to give the model school 'his hearty and active support'.<sup>65</sup>

The inspectors also accepted that the proposed site was on the opposite side of the city to the area where 'the operative classes and humble traders, as well as the chief portion of the poor, live'. This they believed would be to the school's advantage as a socially mixed attendance would now be assured. Whereas to have sited the school 'in the old or Irish quarter' would have resulted in the attendance consisting 'almost wholly ... of the

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

unmixed poor'.<sup>66</sup> 'Considering all the advantages and disadvantages', the site received the inspectors' recommendation and the Board's sanction.

The siting of the school in an urban setting did not dim the interest of its supporters in the provision of agricultural education. Testament to this was the submission of a memorial in September 1851 backed by 147 signatories, representative of the more powerful individuals, both lay and clerical, in Limerick city and county. An analysis of these reveals that it was supported by 7 Lords, 19 clergymen (16 Protestant, 3 Roman Catholic), 4 members of parliament, 10 members of the corporation, 18 magistrates, and 89 'gentry and others'. While Roman Catholic clergymen were under-represented, it should be noted that Bishop Ryan was listed among the supporters. Whatever about the weight of the signatures, a decisive factor must have been the availability of ready funding. Under the terms of the Irish Reproductive Loan Fund, £4,300 lay in the Treasury to the credit of county Limerick. It could be applied 'to the management and improvement of agriculture in the said county'. Under this arrangement the Board paid an annual rent to the trustees, which was used in turn to pay for the instruction and maintenance 'of a certain number of youths from the county and city of Limerick...'.<sup>67</sup> The desire of the Protestant bishop for the introduction of maritime instruction had the concurrence of the inspectors, and was approved by the Board.

Limerick District Model School opened in August 1855 'under more favourable auspices, and with a more reasonable prospect of permanent success, than perhaps any model school in Ireland'. The enrolment by religious denomination - sixty-nine per cent Roman Catholic, twenty-five per cent Established Church, and six per cent Presbyterian - would suggest that William Newell was not unjustified in his assertion. Despite earlier reservations about the siting of the school, the report proclaimed that children of all classes attended. Newell, however, believed it necessary to assure the parents of those children from the higher classes that, 'as the strictest care is taken regarding morals [they] need have no fear from their children sitting on the same bench with those below them in station'. The maritime school was described as 'intended for the sons of sailors, and for sea-going lads' providing 'instruction in navigation, and in the use and handling of nautical instruments'.<sup>68</sup>

Notable amongst the records relating to the Kilkenny application is the absence of reference to contact with either Roman Catholic or Established Church bishops or clergy. The Protestant bishop, James Thomas O'Brien, a noted evangelical,<sup>69</sup> was

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p.133.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p.135.

<sup>68</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-second report ... 1855*, App. G, pp 205-9.

<sup>69</sup>Described by Bowen, *The Protestant Crusade*, p. 76 as 'the most intellectual and the most persuasive

known to be a strong supporter of the Church Education Society and hostile to the national system. His Roman Catholic counterpart, Edmond Walshe, had adopted a neutral tone. During the relatively short period between the initial communication with the Board and the opening of the school five years later a marked change of attitude occurred.

The initial application for a model school and farm was made by Mayor Robert Kane in November 1849, with an accompanying memorial from the Corporation. A previous application from the same body had been unsuccessful in 1846. On the second occasion the memorialists stressed that, given the location of the four schools then in progress, Kilkenny was 'geographically adapted in an eminent degree for the diffusion of the great benefit derivable from such an establishment'. With this assessment the commissioners agreed, though shortage of funds determined that final sanction could not be given until the following year. Efforts throughout the course of 1851 and early 1852 were directed towards the acquisition of a suitable site. The architect was directed to prepare plans similar to those for Galway. The major difficulty encountered at this stage was a temporary failure to agree terms with Richard Smithwick for the leasing of land suitable for a model farm. By the time the school opened in November, 1854 a resolution was in sight.

Kavanagh claimed that the school opened with the approbation of the Roman Catholic clergy.<sup>70</sup> This is questionable. As the day of opening approached Bishop Walshe made objection to the appointment of a Protestant, Miss Entwistle, as a teacher in the Infant school. The *Minutes* record that no instructions were issued 'with regard to the communication'.<sup>71</sup> The matter would appear to have been resolved by the transfer of the Infant teacher to Ballymoney Model School, her replacement by a more acceptable Protestant, Miss Palmer, and the appointment of a Roman Catholic assistant in that department. The *Report* acknowledged that Miss Entwistle 'had to contend with difficulties of a trying and peculiar nature'.<sup>72</sup>

Of the fifty-two pupils on the rolls at opening, all, but one, were Roman Catholic. This, in a school designed to accommodate more than two hundred and fifty pupils demanded an explanation. Timothy Sheahan, the head inspector, attributed the poor response to 'agencies [who] had been employed to prejudice the public mind against the schools'.<sup>73</sup> Obviously, hostile forces were at work within both Roman Catholic and Protestant

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Evangelical mind on the Irish bench'.

<sup>70</sup>Kavanagh, *The Catholic case stated*, p. 190.

<sup>71</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 24 Nov. 1854.

<sup>72</sup>*Kilkenny Journal*, 25 Nov. 1854; *C.N.E.I., Twenty-third report ... 1856*. App. B, p. 108.

<sup>73</sup>*C.N.E.I., Twenty-second report ... 1855*. App. G, p. 284.

sections of the community. While a significant improvement was recorded over the following years, in 1858 Sheahan still reported the opposition of clergymen of both denominations as 'determined'. Kilkenny District Model School would have to cope not only with an increasingly belligerent Roman Catholic clergy but also the hostility of the Protestant bishop to all aspects of the national system.

If problems of a religious nature came to the surface in Kilkenny only as the school was about to be opened, in Waterford the commissioners received early warning. As in Kilkenny, the Board's attention was drawn to the city by a petition. The memorial of July, 1851, presented by Lord Bessborough, included among its clerical signatories Nicholas Foran, the Roman Catholic Bishop, Edward Hoare, the Established Church Dean of Waterford, along with three parish priests and a curate, two rectors and various Presbyterian ministers. The memorial also had the formal support of the Grand Jury. The Board indicated that the application would receive sanction the following year. Before this could happen Roman Catholic opposition was mobilised. By December the Board was aware that Bishop Foran was now against the establishment of a model school. The reason for this about-face is not clear. He was not a confidante or ally of Archbishop Cullen. Kavanagh, in the suppressed part of his 1851 *Report*, mentions that at Foran's triennial visitation in Clonmel in July 'the answering of the Catholic pupils of the model schools ... was such as to call forth the marked approbation of his lordship ...'<sup>74</sup> A letter from the Mayor of Waterford, John A. Blake, warning of the imminence of a counter memorial, suggested that opposition centred around Fr Dominic O'Brien. This is highly probable. O'Brien had served as one of the secretaries to the Synod of Thurles in 1850 and would fulfil a similar role in Dublin in 1854. He succeeded Foran in 1855, and is described by Larkin as 'Cullen's choice'.<sup>75</sup> The writer believed that Foran's 'too yielding disposition gave way before the misrepresentations and unceasing efforts of the opponents of the cause of liberal education'.<sup>76</sup> Be that as it may, once Foran set his face against the project he insisted on the support of his clergy. Appended to a letter of his, published 16 December 1851, were the names of twenty-eight of his clergy. It was reported to the Board that three priests signed only with great reluctance, 'the bishop desiring them to refuse at their peril'. The 'Head of the Society of Friars' informed Blake that he signed 'against his conviction ... merely for peace sake'.<sup>77</sup>

Foran's letter is of more than passing interest in that it is the first public utterance of a bishop, apart from Cullen, on the issue of model schools. Its importance lies in the fact that it more than likely states the views of one of Cullen's proteges.

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<sup>74</sup> Powis, iv, App. No. 16. p. 1305.

<sup>75</sup> Larkin, *The making of the Roman Catholic Church*, p. 325.

<sup>76</sup> Powis, vii, 165.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., pp 165-6.

The Bishop who has charge of your souls, and whom you are bound to obey has publicly declared that he will strenuously resist the efforts now making to establish in this city a pernicious system of education. He could not sanction the projected model school because the principles on which it will be conducted are subversive of those rights which he can neither compromise nor surrender. This school will be founded by a government whose anti-Catholic prejudices it is unnecessary to record, and it will be governed exclusively by the National Board, in the majority of whose members Catholics can place no confidence. Teachers will be appointed and books selected by this partially constituted Board ...<sup>78</sup>

The Board's response to this unwelcome turn of events was to take solace from the repeated assurances of Blake that, despite the hostile attitude of the Roman Catholic clergy, 'popular feeling' remained unaltered. Confirmed in this belief, the commissioners proceeded to press ahead. By mid-1852 the corporate seal had been affixed to the lease of the site, and just one year later the contract had been awarded. Construction was not completed until the summer of 1855. Despite Sheahan's concern that the head teachers in both the male and female departments should be Roman Catholics, the commissioners saw no reason to change their original arrangement of placing a member of the Established Church at the head of the female department and a Roman Catholic teacher in the infant department. Attached to the school was a maritime department.

The Board could take a degree of satisfaction from the breakdown of attendance by religious denomination during the first year. The effects of the hostility shown had not destroyed the prospects of the school being a centre for united education. Of the 373 pupils admitted during the course of the year, sixty-four per cent were registered as Roman Catholics. Of the Protestants, members of the Established Church accounted for twenty-nine per cent of those enrolled. Mayor Blake could feel justified in his speech at the opening to hold out the hope that Waterford District Model School would play an important part in ridding society of its sectarian character.

In this Institution ... persons of every creed can, and will meet together without those often too-well grounded apprehensions of having their faith interfered with; and there is nothing I more heartily rejoice in than the proposal of having Catholic and Protestant educated side by side, for I have a cheerful and well-grounded hope that, being school fellows and play mates in boyhood, they will become colleagues and friends in maturer years.<sup>79</sup>

Belfast was to provide the commissioners with its greatest challenge to date in its desire to establish a working model of united education. The city comprised a relatively even mixture of the three principal denominations.<sup>80</sup> When the initial approach was made in

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<sup>78</sup>National Archives Ireland (N.A.I.) ED7/2: *Wexford People*, 26 Jan. 1856.

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*, *Leinster Express*, 15 Sept. 1855.

<sup>80</sup>*Powis*, vii, 75. Established Church - 25 per cent; Roman Catholic - 34 per cent; Presbyterian - 35 per cent.



December 1852, albeit with a maritime school in mind, it is not surprising the Board offered the far more prestigious district model school with a maritime department attached. Here, if anywhere, the effectiveness of the model school in promoting ethnic harmony could be tested. The initial obstacles were of a practical nature. The acquisition of a site for the maritime school from Belfast Harbour Commissioners required an act of parliament. The Roman Catholic bishop, and recently appointed commissioner, Dr. Cornelius Denvir expedited the acquisition of land for a model farm. It was the financial arrangements for the site of the model school itself, situated in the area of the Falls Road, which proved most troublesome. Considering its prime location a premium rent was sought. This the Board succeeded in having 'fined down' through the payment of a lump sum by a number of millers and other businessmen in the area. In October 1854 the tender was awarded, but trouble with the foundations added considerably to both cost and delay. It was not until January 1857 that the opening was imminent. The report by Head Inspector Patrick Joseph Keenan leaves one in no doubt that this establishment, built at a final cost of £11,201 - some thirty per cent over budget - was, if not the jewel in the crown, the *primus inter pares* (see *Plates II-V*<sup>81</sup>). The senior staff of eighteen was complemented by junior staff of twenty pupil-teachers and twenty-four paid monitresses. The total number of pupils admitted on the first day was 697. By the fourth day this had climbed to 906, and by the day of the public opening, 19 May, it stood at 1,092.<sup>82</sup> The principal denominations were represented as follows - Established Church - nineteen per cent, Roman Catholics - thirty-four per cent, Presbyterians - thirty-five per cent, and Methodists - ten per cent. Arrangements were made with the nominated clergymen of all denominations to give religious instruction.<sup>83</sup> Keenan assured the members of the public that the teachers appointed to the staff had been 'selected from the most experienced teachers of our other Model Schools,' while their assistants in the service of the Board had 'distinguished themselves, and exhibited fitness for higher office'.<sup>84</sup>

Organisational problems of a religious nature soon arose. Originally, it had been intended that seventeen pupil-teachers and twenty-two paid monitresses would be appointed, and the numbers from each denomination fixed. Shortly after opening James Gibson - later a member of the Powis Commission - claimed that Presbyterians were not represented in proportion to their numbers. In resolving this issue the number of pupil teachers was increased to twenty, with the three new appointments being Presbyterian. Regarding the paid monitresses, the number was to be increased to twenty-four, with the

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<sup>81</sup> These are reproduced from the *Twenty-fourth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland, 1857*, [2456-1]. H.C. 1859, vii (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fourth report ... 1857*).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, App. A. p. 56.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

extra two to be members of the Established Church. In order to avoid a re-occurrence, Keenan was requested, in future, to have appointments sanctioned beforehand.<sup>85</sup> Due to a number of instances of children of mixed marriages being presented for registration, Keenan sought guidance from the Board on procedure. In general, he was informed that the right of the father was paramount. In the case of a child 'of sufficient intelligence' favouring a particular kind of religious instruction, 'irrespective of the wish of either father or mother, or both', the Board would decide. Not surprisingly, on the first day of opening, objection was made to the use of *Scripture Extracts* by some of the parents. In line with its decision on the Whately affair, the Board decided that 'the works in question are to be read by those pupils whose parents so desire'.<sup>86</sup>

The interest shown by Dr Denvir in the establishment of Belfast District Model School not only helped to see the project through the number of practical difficulties that were encountered, but, more importantly, clearly indicated to the Roman Catholic clergy and laity of Belfast that he wholeheartedly approved. His sudden resignation from the Board in late 1857 did not bode well for the school's continued attraction to the Roman Catholic population. *Saunders Journal* found itself at a loss to explain the resignation, suggesting that it was possibly due to a difficulty he found in attending to the Board's business or an unwillingness to be compromised by any of its decisions. The *Evening Packet* harboured no such misgivings. It was sure that Archbishop Cullen was responsible for the resignation. 'At the instance of the Legate [Cullen] Dr Denvir was summoned before the Pontiff and lectured for his moderation, which he learned did not suit the temper of the day'. In early January it returned to the issue, claiming that Denvir was 'removed from the Board because he did not prove himself ultramontane enough - not sufficiently pliable in the hands of the manipulator CULLEN'.<sup>87</sup> It is now seen as the result of a directive from *Propaganda Fide*.<sup>88</sup> This does not in any way diminish the possibility that it was issued at the prompting of Archbishop Cullen. What one can state with certainty is that Cullen's known communications with Rome and the content of various pastorals showed that the attention of Hierarchy was increasingly being focused on their objections to the Board's model schools. The commissioners' response to this unwelcome attention would have obvious implications for the further expansion of the model school infrastructure.

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<sup>85</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 12 June 1857.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, 19 June 1857.

<sup>87</sup>N.A.I. ED7/4 - *Saunders Journal*, 20 Nov. 1857; *Evening Packet*, 24 Nov. 1857, 5 Jan. 1858.

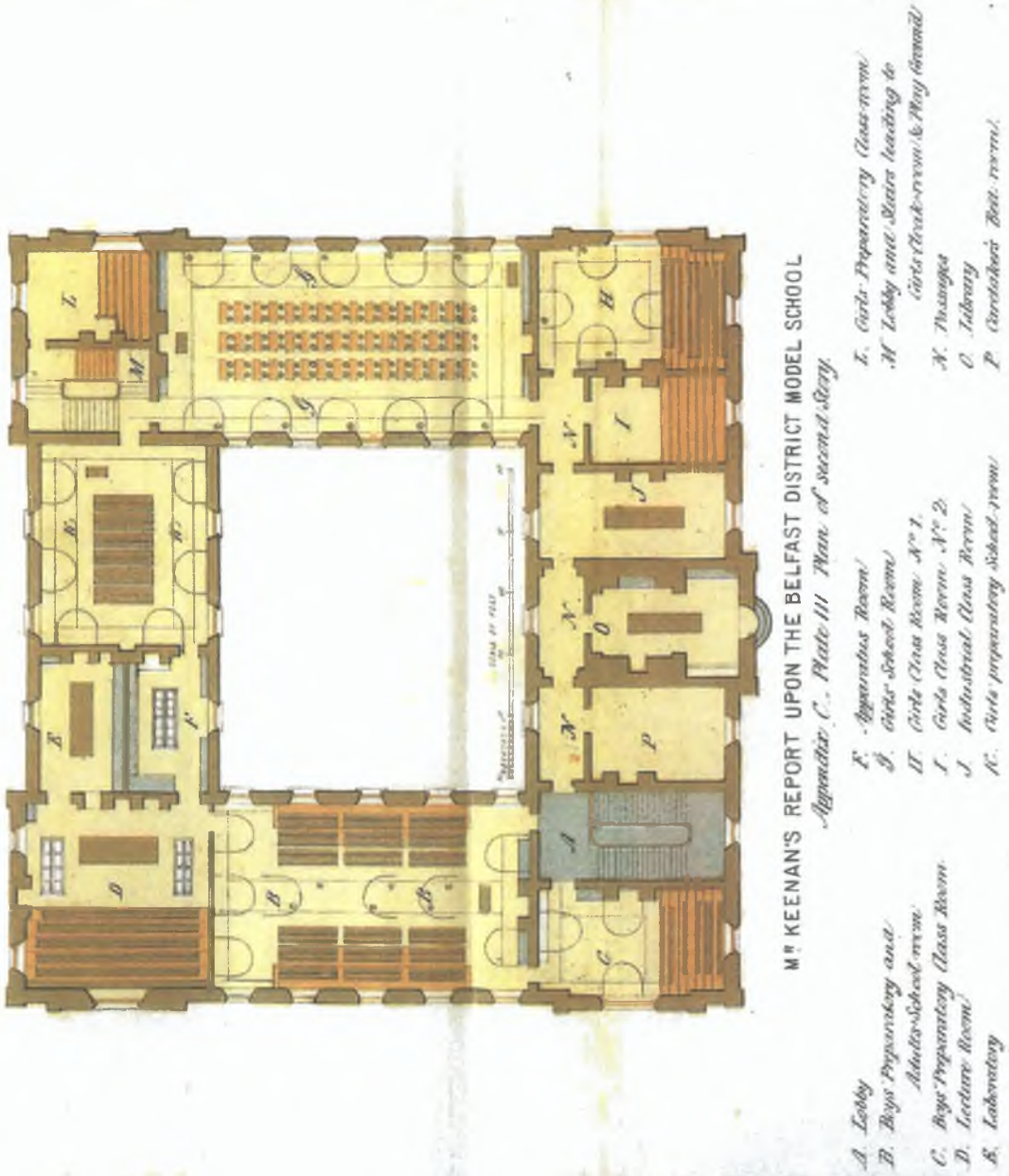
<sup>88</sup>Ignatius Murphy, 'Primary Education' in Patrick J. Corish (ed.) *A History of Irish Catholicism*, v, pt. 6, p. 31. The source given is *Acta* 221, 42, f. 56v.

Plate II. *Belfast District Model School*

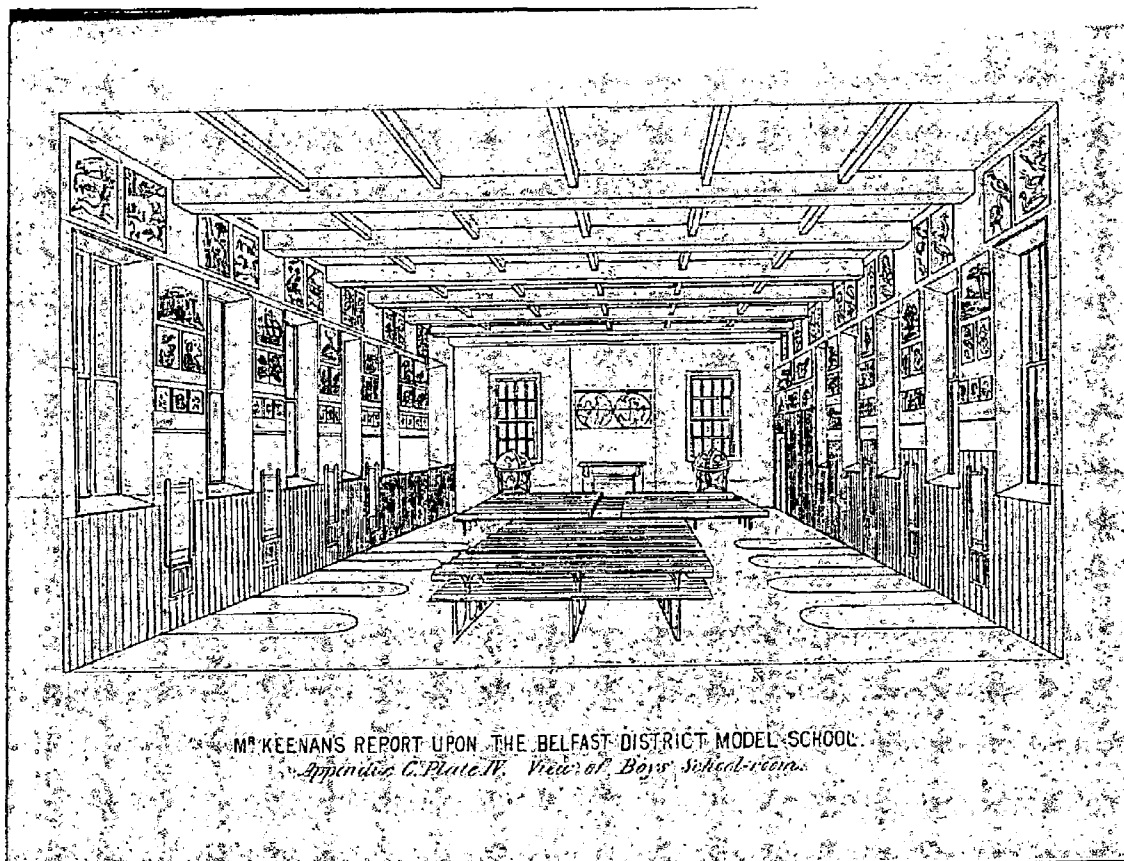


MR KEENAN'S REPORT ON THE BELFAST DISTRICT MODEL SCHOOL.  
*Appendix C. Plate I. View of the Exterior of the Belfast Model School.*

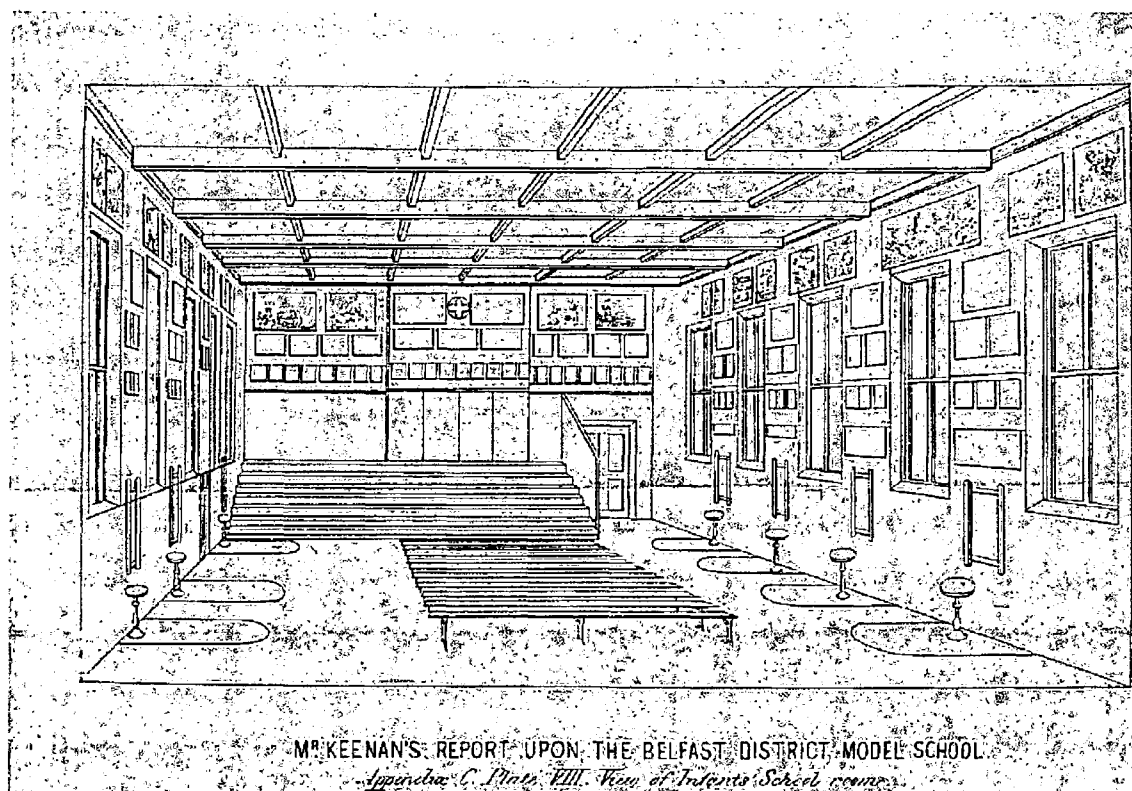
Plate III. Ground Plan – Belfast District Model School



**Plate IV. Boys' Schoolroom**



**Plate V. Infants' Schoolroom**





## The Retreat to Ulster, 1858-66

The attitude of Archbishop Cullen to the national system was indisputably the most decisive influence on the course of elementary education policy in nineteenth-century Ireland. His success in marshalling the support of the great majority of his suffragans, the weight his counsel was accorded by all but a few of the principal Roman Catholic laity, and the deferential manner that many of its elected representatives found it expedient to espouse, ensured that his all-permeating authority would, in the end, have to be acknowledged by the National Board of Education, forcing it to question the wisdom of defending its own fundamental principle of 'united' education. With regard to model schools, Cullen's hostile stance had a crucial bearing on the location of the later establishments, the dramatic fall-off in Roman Catholic lay support, and the undermining of their preparatory training function. Ultimately, he was responsible for their emasculation.

In the early years of his archiepiscopacy, initially in Armagh, but from 1852 in Dublin, Cullen was deflected from paying as much attention as he might have wished to the issue of model schools by more pressing matters, both civil and ecclesiastical. Politically, the activities of the Independent Irish Party distracted him, with his attitude to the Sadlier/Keogh defections exacerbating his already-strained relationship with John MacHale, Archbishop of Tuam. The disdain shown for Frederick Lucas set a clear marker for others among the Roman Catholic laity as to what Cullen perceived to be the extent of their contribution. Administratively, he brought his influence to bear on all episcopal appointments during the period in an ultimately successful move to consolidate his power base. In education, his most pressing concern was to establish a Catholic University to rival the Queen's Colleges. His approach here was a further factor in alienating MacHale. By the mid-1850s the *Evening Packet* was in no doubt that the erosion of the 'rights and privileges of the laity' which resulted from the decrees of the Synod of Thurles served only to '[embolden] further aggressions, and [to whet] the appetite for a more tyrannical ascendancy'. The paper assured its readers that he now sought to tighten further his control over the priests and to 'obtain a dangerous influence over their educational establishments'.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, his designs were more far-reaching. His was to be the overarching influence on developments in the education field during this second period of model school development.

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<sup>1</sup>N.A.I., ED7/1: *Evening Packet*, 18 Jan. 1855.

### ***6.1 Archbishop Cullen and the McGauley affair***

In March, 1858, Cullen indicated to Rome that the Irish bishops would not tolerate an extension of the model school system. On this issue both he and MacHale were at one. Matters had not been helped by the enshrinement of the 'Stopford Rule'<sup>2</sup> in the revised *Rules and Regulations* published in the 1855 *Report*. The objectionable section read:

Patrons, managers, and teachers, are not required to exclude any children from any religious instruction given in the school; but all children are to have full power to absent themselves, or to withdraw, from it. If any parents or guardians object to the religious instruction given in a National school, it devolves upon them to adopt measures to prevent their children from being present thereat.<sup>3</sup>

It is understandable how such a rule, which essentially placed the onus on the child to guard against religious corruption, fuelled Roman Catholic suspicions. The concerns of the 'Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland' expressed in a pastoral letter were carried in the *Freeman's Journal*:

The schools held in connexion with the National Board of Education have been to us a constant source of solicitude. We regret to perceive that attempts are made, and have been made, in Parliament to render them hostile to our religion and to convert them into nurseries of proselytism ...<sup>4</sup>

It was at this stage that Archbishop Cullen got his first opportunity to flex his muscles in dealings with the Commissioners of National Education. The incident involved the resignation of one of the heads of the Training Department, a Roman Catholic priest, the Reverend James McGauley. In essence, Cullen successfully sought McGauley's dismissal by the Board on grounds of immorality. Found to have been in cohabitation with one of his former female students, the priest was informed by the Board that his 'gross indiscretion calculated to bring discredit on the Training Department ... [rendered] him unfit to be continued in his present office.'<sup>5</sup>

The resignation, which McGauley would later claim with some justification, was made under duress, allowed the Board to play down the incident. It is not detailed in its official publications. It is not alluded to by Kavanagh in the *Catholic Case Stated*, nor is it referred to in the *Report* of the Powis Commission. Its strange omission from these works which, in other areas, were only too quick to latch on to events which were awkward for the Board, prompts one to wonder whether it was deliberately overlooked in order not to give gratuitous offence to Roman Catholic clerical sensibilities. Apart

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<sup>2</sup>For the background to this 'rule' see Akenson, *Irish education experiment*, pp 200-1.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in Powis, *i*, 151.

<sup>4</sup>N.A.I., ED7/2: *Freeman's Journal*, 10 July 1856.

<sup>5</sup>For the Board's handling of this case see *M.C.N.E.I.*, 28 Nov., 2, 5, 8 Dec. 1856.

from the attention it has received from Susan Parkes, it has not surfaced in writings on the history of Irish education.<sup>6</sup>

While McGauley's resignation eased matters for the Board and saved it from appearing to have succumbed to Archbishop Cullen's demands, its hopes that the scandal would be kept from the public were soon dashed. As McGauley prepared to depart for America, he published a pamphlet setting out his view of events. Elements of the press left their readership in no doubt as to the covert pressure they claimed had been brought to bear on the Board by Cullen. As reported in *Saunders Newsletter*, McGauley claimed that Cullen had been the one who had initiated the inquiry. The complainant was scathing in his remarks regarding the Archbishop, stating that his 'real crime' was that he 'was not disposed to bow [his] neck to the despotism he had introduced'. Believing the Board to be 'in dread of his [Cullen's] very name', McGauley charged that twenty years of good service 'was forgotten in a moment to please the Pope's representative'. Furthermore, he accused the commissioners of allowing themselves to be used as Cullen's instrument in his efforts

to obtain a complete control of the education of the country ... [and] finding that it must either sacrifice me to his enmity, or be subject to a violent outburst on his part, shamefully preferred the former.<sup>7</sup>

A further twist was added by the *Evening Packet* which claimed that Cullen, in order to put pressure on the Board, had orchestrated a deadlock by ordering the Roman Catholic teachers in training not to attend Professor McGauley's lectures.<sup>8</sup> Official records are silent on this matter.

The controversy rumbled on in the press throughout the remainder of 1857. A reported letter from Canada in McGauley's name, printed in the *Evening Packet*, stated that he had severed his connections with the Church of Rome 'and I have publicly joined the English Episcopal Church'. By way of explanation, he declared that he could no longer accept certain dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church, 'including the new dogma of the Immaculate Conception'.<sup>9</sup> Scattered entries in the Board's *Minutes* during the 1860s indicate that McGauley unsuccessfully looked for compensation for unfair dismissal from service.

The *de facto* recognition by the Board of the notion that its dealings with Roman Catholic clergy, as officers or agents, could not proceed in the absence of ecclesiastical

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<sup>6</sup>Susan Parkes, *Teacher training in Ireland, 1811-1870*, pp 117-9.

<sup>7</sup>N.A.I., ED7/3: *Saunders Newsletter*, 4 Mar. 1857.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, *Evening Packet*, 14 Mar. 1857.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.* *Evening Packet*, 5 Sept. 1857. See also *Evening Packet*, 20 Aug. 1857, *Saunders Newsletter*, 19 Apr.[sic], 9 Sept. 1857.



sanction had long-term implications. This was most notably evident in the 'Callan Case' of the 1870s. Of more immediate concern, though not possible to quantify, was the effect that pressure, both covert and overt, had on the Board's plans for the on-going expansion of its scheme of model schools. The commissioners' response, based on the compelling circumstantial evidence, would suggest that it was significant. In light of the mounting opposition a more circumspect approach was understandable. The preference for Ulster locations became pronounced. Was united education possible in these schools in the Protestant heartland? Could the Board maintain some vestige of equilibrium in the distribution of these schools?

## ***6.2 Minor Model Schools***

The Board's announcement that it proposed to undertake the building and management of minor model schools drew an immediate response from Archbishop Cullen. In a circular to his clergy, in which he identified the two great evils of the national system as proselytism, and education in the control of Protestants, he informed them that

the many model and agricultural schools now in existence, and the proposed common schools to be built at the sole expense of the state, and under the exclusive control of the Board, show to what an extent these two evils have already extended, or are likely to extend ...<sup>10</sup>

Of the seven sites chosen by the sub-committee for minor model schools, all but one were located in Ulster. Of these, three - Monaghan, Omagh, and Newtownstewart - had been turned down as locations for district model schools. In these cases the sub-committee was aware of the desire for a model school contained in the memorials submitted. Ballymoney was an existing model agricultural school with significant cross-denominational support. Carrickfergus was favoured by the sub-committee because of its potential as a maritime school. The commissioners' attention had been directed to Lurgan, the last such school to be completed, by John Hancock, Lord Lurgan's agent. The documentary records for all these schools indicate that the presence or absence of cross-denominational support for the application was now not a deciding factor.<sup>11</sup> The commissioners did, nonetheless, hold the line on the question of proportionate representation of the denominations relating to staffing. There is even evidence of 'positive discrimination' in favour of Roman Catholics. It is reasonable to infer that the Board expected these schools to attract a measure of cross-denominational attendance and support.

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Mar. 1857.

<sup>11</sup>Surviving correspondence relating to the establishment of these schools was published in *Powis* vii: Ballymoney pp 102-5; Carrickfergus pp 107-9; Lurgan pp 137-9; Monaghan pp 139-40; Newtownstewart pp 144-6; Omagh pp 146-51; Parsonstown p. 151.

Early indications were, for the most part encouraging. The unsuccessful Omagh application of 1855 was supported by both the parish priest and his curate. Similarly, the original Newtown Stewart memorial of July 1853 was at pains to bring to the notice of the commissioners 'the prevalence ... of cordial feeling among all religious denominations'. Significantly, the internal documentary evidence suggests that the application was not supported by the parish priest. From the initial Monaghan memorial and the subsequent head inspector's report it is not possible to gauge the level of denominational co-operation, but such were the auspicious indicators during its first year of operation that Hunter assured the commissioners that they had 'much reason to congratulate themselves on the great success that has attended the establishment of this model school'.<sup>12</sup> The Lurgan memorial submitted by 'the inhabitants of the town' was supported by the parish priest, William O'Brien - manager of the only national school in the town. He was referred to by Lord Lurgan's agent as 'our excellent parish priest'. The Carrickfergus application contains nothing by way of information on the level of commitment to the project by any denomination. With Roman Catholics forming but a small minority among the general population of the area co-operation was possibly accorded an even lower degree of importance. One could justifiably claim that in Ballymoney there was significant backing for united education. On its elevation to the status of minor model school in 1856 Keenan reported that the official opening was attended by clergymen of 'all denominations'.<sup>13</sup>

Whatever early optimism there may have been proved to be misplaced. In Omagh, Roman Catholic efforts to provide alternative institutions led to the opening of Christian Brother and Convent schools in the town. Other national schools were also described as being 'under the parish priest'. Well provided for educationally, Roman Catholics could afford to ignore the model school. Consequently, at the opening of the Omagh school in February 1860 not one Roman Catholic was entered on rolls, and a memorial in the same year seeking its elevation to district model school status bears no evidence of Roman Catholic support. The opening of a Christian Brothers' school in Monaghan, too, was a decisive factor. By the end of its first year of operation Roman Catholics accounted for forty-six per cent of those on the rolls of the model school.<sup>14</sup> The existence of only one other national school in the town, along with the care taken by the Board to have all denominations fairly represented on the staff must be seen as crucial to this early success. But with the establishment of the Christian Brothers' school in the

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<sup>12</sup> *Twenty-eighth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1861*, [3026], *H.C. 1862*, xx (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Twenty-eighth report ... 1861*), App. C., p. 98.

<sup>13</sup> C.N.E.I., *Twenty-third report ... 1856*, App. B., p. 137.

<sup>14</sup> C.N.E.I., *Twenty-eighth report ... 1861*, App. C., p. 97.

mid-1860s attendance of Roman Catholics dropped dramatically, and stood at just seven per cent in 1867.<sup>15</sup>

In the cases of the Newtownstewart and Lurgan schools the prior involvement of the respective parish priests in managing their own schools under the Board provided Roman Catholics with an existing alternative to the minor model schools. The Newtownstewart application brought to the commissioners' notice the extensive level of mixing already to be found in the district. Twenty-seven per cent of those attending schools under Protestant management were Roman Catholics, while, even more remarkably, fifty-nine per cent of those attending schools under Roman Catholic patronage were Protestants. These bald statistics are misleading. Children of all denominations appeared to attend the school most convenient to them, and, crucially, the only school in Newtownstewart itself was under Roman Catholic patronage. The establishment of a rival school in the town could not be endorsed by the parish priest. The Board's efforts to have fair representation of all denominations on the teaching staff, in this instance, did nothing to entice Roman Catholics away from the parish priest's school. During its first year of operation they accounted for just two per cent of those on rolls.<sup>16</sup> Ironically, if not indeed perversely, the establishment of Newtownstewart Minor Model school had the effect of polarising a school community where united education had once been the salient feature. In Lurgan, Fr O'Brien found himself in a similar predicament. To have supported the newly opened minor model school would have undermined the viability of the school under his own direct patronage. Consequently, his willingness to be associated with the memorial did not translate into active support. A respectable attendance by Roman Catholics - by 1865 it had reached sixteen per cent - inclines one to the view that the parish priest offered no active opposition.<sup>17</sup> Even in Ballymoney where Roman Catholic representation among the student body at one stage reflected exactly its proportion in the community at large - thirty-one per cent - support after 1866 evaporated rapidly, and by 1871 stood at a mere one per cent.<sup>18</sup> This happened despite a generous representation of Roman Catholics on the teaching staff.

The Carrickfergus school was unusual in that, described as opening 'under rather unfavourable circumstances', initially, it was not enthusiastically supported by the members of any denomination. Gradually its appeal grew, and by the end of the second

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<sup>15</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-fourth report ... 1867*, App. B., p. 126.

<sup>16</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-eighth report ... 1861*, App. C., pp 93-4.

<sup>17</sup>*Thirty-second report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1865*, [3713], H.C. 1866, xxix (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Thirty-second report ... 1865*), App. B., p. 95.

<sup>18</sup>Nineteen per cent of those on rolls in 1866 were Roman Catholics - C.N.E.I., *Thirty-third report ... 1866*, App. B., p. 106. For 1871 see C.N.E.I., *Thirty-eighth report ... 1871*, App. B., p. 116.

year Roman Catholics represented ten per cent of those on rolls.<sup>19</sup> In an area where they formed just fifteen per cent of the population, it could be claimed that the school provided a realistic degree of united education. As in other schools, over-representation of Roman Catholics on the teaching staff failed to secure this achievement. By 1864 the number of pupils had slipped back to six per cent, and by 1867 it had fallen to two per cent.<sup>20</sup> Thereafter it was not even mentioned in annual reports. Clearly alternative arrangements had been made.

In those minor model schools where there was early evidence of toleration by Roman Catholics it is difficult to escape the conclusion that it was opportunistic, prompted by short-term educational exigencies. When an acceptable alternative presented itself tolerance gave way to active opposition. Generous representation of Roman Catholics on the teaching staffs of these schools did not make them anymore acceptable. Where schools existed under Roman Catholic management, the minor model schools held appeal only for Protestants. By 1871, in the minor model schools of Ulster, there was little evidence of united education. Of the 2,492 enrolled, only four per cent were Roman Catholics. This was in areas where forty-two per cent of the population was recorded as being of that faith.<sup>21</sup> Overall, the early willingness exhibited by Roman Catholics to avail of education in minor model schools where no suitable alternative existed was matched only by the haste with which they abandoned the same institutions when a denominational alternative presented itself.

### ***6.3 Later Ulster District Model Schools***

During the later phase of model school construction three district model schools were established in Ulster. These were located in Londonderry, Enniskillen and Newtownards. In the case of the first two the Board's attention was drawn by memorials representative of the landed, business and Protestant clerical interests of the areas. The Newtownards application was in the name of a Protestant clergyman. Significantly, it was made clear to the Board that the application had the full backing of the Marquess of Londonderry who undertook to provide a site rent free. There is no evidence that the Board's inspectorate sought to gauge the existing level of inter-denominational co-operation with regard to any of these applications.<sup>22</sup> One would have thought that

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<sup>19</sup>*Twenty-ninth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1862*, [3235], H.C. 1863, xvii, pt. i (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Twenty-ninth report ... 1862*), App. B., p. 57.

<sup>20</sup>*Thirty-first report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1864*, [3496], H.C. 1865, xix (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Thirty-first report ... 1864*), App. B., p. 106; *Thirty-fourth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1867*, [4026], H.C. 1867-68, xxvi (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Thirty-fourth report ... 1867*), App. B., p. 123.

<sup>21</sup>Attendance at minor model schools by religious denomination - C.N.E.I., *Thirty-seventh report ... 1871*, p. 28; General denominational composition - *Powis*, vii, 74-88, 'Population by religious denominations of each town and city in which a model school is situate ...'.

<sup>22</sup>*Powis*, vii, Enniskillen - pp 122-6; Londonderry - pp 136-7; Newtownards - pp 142-3.

this would have been appropriate in Londonderry and Enniskillen where there were large Roman Catholic populations - fifty-eight and thirty-four per cent respectively.<sup>23</sup> This failure suggests that it may have been adjudged to be a futile exercise.

In the three schools the headships were divided among the three principal denominations in line with standard practice. The appointment of junior staff is more revealing in that it reflected the extent of local support. In Londonderry only three of the twenty five junior staff were Roman Catholics.<sup>24</sup> In Enniskillen they accounted for just two of the total of nine.<sup>25</sup> In Newtownards, where Roman Catholics formed just twelve per cent of the total population,<sup>26</sup> their over-representation on the senior staff was significant. This must be seen as a confidence building measure. Apart from the headship of the infant school, two of the six assistants were also Roman Catholics. On the junior staff they accounted for five out of the twenty-four.<sup>27</sup>

Despite the Board's awareness of the need to have Roman Catholics adequately represented at the level of senior staff, the prospects for these three schools were not enhanced by the existence of alternative establishments under Roman Catholic clerical management. In Londonderry, a convent school was located just 300 yards from the proposed site of the district model school. This would tend to bolster the argument that the Board managed school was intended for Protestants. In Newtownards, a Roman Catholic school had recently opened. It was not stated whether this was a deliberate act or part of the general effort to provide education in an acceptable setting. In Enniskillen it is certain that the parish priest did move decisively to thwart the Board's intentions. Prior to the opening of the district model school Very Reverend J. McNeil severed his connection with the Board and closed the boys' national school of which he had been manager to encourage the pupils to transfer to the local Christian Brothers' school. Despite the successful efforts of the Roman Catholic clergy to provide alternatives, the Board's view, as expressed by two of its inspectors, that 'at no very remote date' Roman Catholics would fall under the spell of the model schools and be 'fairly represented in our attendance',<sup>28</sup> proved presumptuous if not consciously insincere. The ineffectiveness of the strategy of encouraging Roman Catholics to enrol through the sharing of headships, and, at times, through over-representation on the senior staff, was fully exposed by the scant level of support shown by Roman Catholics where it counted - enrolment of their children in the district model schools. During its first year of

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., Londonderry - p. 74; Enniskillen - p. 122.

<sup>24</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-ninth report ... 1862*. Staff Appointments - App. B., pp 103-4.

<sup>25</sup>*Thirty-fifth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1868*, [4193], H.C. 1868-69, xxi (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Thirty-fifth report ... 1868*), App. B., p. 135.

<sup>26</sup>*Powis* vii, 78.

<sup>27</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-ninth report ... 1862*. App. B., p. 63.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

operation, just two out of 403 pupils in Newtownards were Roman Catholics.<sup>29</sup> In Londonderry it did not exceed one per cent,<sup>30</sup> while in Enniskillen it hovered between three and six per cent.<sup>31</sup>

When we examine below the background to the establishment of the later schools outside of Ulster it is incontestable that growing Roman Catholic opposition was a major factor in prompting a preference for Ulster locations. Here, at least, the schools could be assured of significant support. In Ulster, this was now the critical criterion. All the better if the absence of active opposition on the part of the Roman Catholic clergy could be superadded. The earlier concern with the goal of united education, which characterised the first phase of development, was much diminished. The Board would appear to have been content to maintain a denominational balance among the staff. Overall, the religious composition of the staff was expected to reflect that of the community in which the school was located. The general desertion of the schools by Roman Catholics from the mid-60s made this an increasingly difficult position to defend. In Londonderry it had never even been attempted. Even if the Board were committed to proportionate representation, the effect of the resolute efforts of the Roman Catholic hierarchy would most likely have made it ultimately untenable. The trend was just as pronounced in the district model schools established in the period of qualified co-operation. Only Bailieborough escaped unscathed. Of the others, Coleraine managed to keep Roman Catholic enrolment above ten per cent. In Newry it stood at fifteen per cent in 1870 in the face of 'the unceasing hostility of the Roman Catholic clergy' and competition from a Christian Brothers' and two convent schools.<sup>32</sup> These were the clear exceptions.

#### **6.4 Declining Roman Catholic Support**

Outside of Ulster a similar pattern can be detected. Though still exhibiting a significant level of mixing, in just two of the seven schools outside of Dublin did the attendance of Roman Catholics exceed fifty per cent in the late 1860s. Local circumstances appeared to dictate attitude. In Dunmanway, where Roman Catholic enrolment was in excess of ninety per cent, the model school was in effect a denominational school. The situation in Trim was much the same until 1868. In that year, following the opening of a convent school, Roman Catholic enrolment dropped from eighty-four per cent to sixty-eight per cent. Athy also witnessed a dramatic drop in the numbers of girls attending when a new convent opened in 1859. The opening of a Christian Brothers' school in 1862 saw the

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>30</sup>*Thirtieth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1863*, [3351], H.C. 1864, xix, pt. ii (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Thirtieth report ... 1863*), App. B., p. 64.

<sup>31</sup>1868 - 5%; 1869 - 3%; 1870 - 3%; 1871 - 4%; 1874 - 6%. From the relevant *Annual Reports*.

<sup>32</sup>*Thirty-seventh report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1870*, [C 360], H.C. 1871, xxiii (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Thirty-seventh Report ... 1870*), App. B., p. 169.

overall Roman Catholic attendance fall to twenty per cent. Other schools suffered to a greater or lesser degree.

The experience of the three 'Metropolitan Schools' was more akin to that of Dunmanway and Bailieborough. They retained the confidence of the Roman Catholic laity. For a time after the withdrawal of support by the Roman Catholic clergy in both West Dublin and Inchicore in 1862 the number of children of that persuasion did decrease. In the former, in proportionate terms, it was slight. The greater factor in the large decrease in absolute enrolment numbers was more probably an increase in school fees.<sup>33</sup> In Inchicore, where there was a more even denominational balance, the initial effect of the withdrawal of support led to quite a dramatic drop - from fifty-four per cent to forty-one per cent over the year - but the recovery was equally impressive, and throughout the second half of the 1860s it remained steady at around sixty per cent. Only when alternative schools under Roman Catholic management were opened in the 1870s were children again withdrawn.<sup>34</sup>

The effects this withdrawal of support had on enrolment at the Board's showpiece, the Dublin Central Model School, were more complex. According to Professor Edward Butler of the Training Department, the Reverend Thomas Power, a priest attached to the Pro-Cathedral, ceased to give religious instruction following his appointment as president of Clonliffe College. Archbishop Cullen did not sanction a replacement. The nuns who were accustomed to attend withdrew their services from about 1865.<sup>35</sup> The duty of imparting religious instruction was undertaken by P.W. Joyce, then headmaster of the 'Number 1' School. This was something he felt distinctly uncomfortable doing. Furthermore, he accompanied the Roman Catholic teachers in training to morning mass in the Pro-Cathedral one day a week. Verbal representations made by him to his superiors on the need for religious instruction for Roman Catholics went unheeded.<sup>36</sup>

In this case, as in the two other Dublin schools, the withdrawal of clerical support did not lead to a sustained decrease in Roman Catholic enrolment. However, the desertion of the institute by the Roman Catholic spiritual mentors had the telling effect of

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<sup>33</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-second report ... 1865*, App. B. p. 156. Average on rolls fell from 572 to 518 from 1864 to 1865. At the same time the proportion paying at the intermediate rate rose from 12 per cent to 38 per cent. A decrease of 2.5 per cent in attendance between 1863 and 1864 was attributed to the opening of a Christian Brothers' school in Harrington Street (C.N.E.I., *Thirty-first report ... 1864*, App. B., p. 95).

<sup>34</sup>See C.N.E.I., *Twenty-eighth report ... 1861*, App. C., p. 83; C.N.E.I., *Twenty-ninth report ... 1862*, App. B., p. 28; *Thirty-third report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1866*, [3905], H.C. 1867, xxiv (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Thirty-third report ... 1866*), App. B., p. 122; *Forty-first report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1874*, [C 1228], H.C. 1875, xxv (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Forty-first report ... 1874*), Appendix, p. 60.

<sup>35</sup>Powis iii, 257.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.* pp 274, 282 & 279.

broadening the school's appeal among Protestants. While Roman Catholic enrolment dropped by a mere eight per cent between 1858 and 1867, during the same period, that by all other denominations rose by a staggering 240 per cent.<sup>37</sup> Overall, in Dublin, clerical disapproval, on its own, was not enough to ensure the withdrawal of Roman Catholic children. As elsewhere, there had to be a ready alternative. Of this the Roman Catholic hierarchy was fully aware.

The rationale behind the qualified toleration of model schools by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, described by Kavanagh as 'a mere question of local prudence', is indicated in a letter from Bishop John McEvilly of Galway to his flock, in January 1863 on the occasion of the opening of two new schools 'for the middle class of society'. 'We abstained from any formal denunciation of the model school of this city until we had first provided a suitable substitute ...'. The faithful were now assured that the opening of these schools '[gave] Catholic parents no excuse for sending children to the model school'. Cullen's message in Athy the previous year, on the occasion of the opening of the Christian Brothers' school, had been far more direct and threatening. He was reported as announcing the withholding of the Sacrament of Confirmation 'from every pupil attending or who would attend or receive instruction in the so-called Model School of Athy'. Dr George Butler of Limerick spoke out in similar vein, threatening to impose penalties on those who did not comply. Bishop McEvilly felt compelled to return to the topic in the following year. He accepted that parents had a civil right to make whatever provision they wished for the education of their children, but he denied they had a moral right to do so.<sup>38</sup>

The attitude of the hierarchy and laity, when controversial, attracted much attention in the press. In this medium there was little room for objective comment, with a hard-line stance on matters pertaining to politics, religion and education being the norm. The few 'liberal' Roman Catholics who had the temerity to seek compromise and understanding were rounded on by papers backing the episcopal line on education. J.R. Corballis, one-time Commissioner of National Education, addressing the Kilkenny Grand Jury, in October 1859, brought to their attention the fall off in attendance at Kilkenny District Model School. He was in no doubt that it was due to the attitude of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. This body, he assured the grand jurors, commanded his highest and most sincere respect:

Many of them were his private friends... and nothing but a sense of charity which he owed to the public would induce him to state the opinion which he held on the subject.

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid. vii. Abstract of statistics from 'Paragraph 9', p. 49.

<sup>38</sup>N.L.I., *Larcom Papers*. MS. 7651: *Freemans Journal*, 9 Jan. 1863; *The Mail*, 2 Aug. 1862; *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Dec. 1863; *The Express*, 12 Jan. 1864.



In essence, he questioned the right of the clergy to interfere in the decisions of parents with respect to the secular education of their children.<sup>39</sup>

Castigation was swift in coming. His comments were seen by Catholic apologists as achieving nothing more than providing a hostile press and government 'with a plausible ground for denying that the demands of the bishops are made with the full and hearty assent of the whole Catholic people.' Others challenged his right even to question the decision of their bishops: he was advised that 'no true Catholic can set up his judgment, not even a Queen's Council, against the bishops'. Comments by other notable Roman Catholics, Sir Robert Kane and Stephen de Vere drew similar trenchant rebukes.<sup>40</sup>

As this suggests, parents, children and teachers associated with the model schools were, if Roman Catholic, increasingly likely to be subjected to intense and unremitting pressure, through public pronouncement or the threatened withdrawal of Church sacraments, to abandon the model schools when an acceptable alternative existed. If the quest for a denominational system were to be successful, the Roman Catholic body, led by its hierarchy, would have to be seen to act in unison.

#### **6.5 Campaign for a denominational system**

Growing Roman Catholic pleas for radical changes, with the object of replacing the existing united system of education with one that accommodated denominational wishes, could not be indefinitely dismissed. This campaign received a timely fillip with the publication of J.W. Kavanagh's *Catholic Case Stated...* in 1859. Kavanagh, whose relationship with the Board since the early 1840s had been fractious, resigned his position as a head inspector in 1858 following a disciplinary decision that did not conclude in his favour. In his work, the selective use of statistics and the highlighting of instances of alleged proselytising provided the Roman Catholic hierarchy with a powerful lever in its quest for concessions. While well received by the bishops, Cullen's initial response to the intended publication was circumspect. Fully aware of Kavanagh's difficulty with the Board, he confided in Bishop Gillooly of Elphin that 'it is doubtful whether he can do any good as he writes merely because he was set aside by the Board, or rather degraded'. It also appeared that Cullen was unaware of the scope of the proposed publication, referring to it dismissively as a 'pamphlet'. When published, he had no doubt as to its efficacy. This time he felt assured in writing to Gillooly that 'Cavanagh has damaged the National Board exceedingly. I hope it will either fall or be reformed...'.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>N.A.I. ED7/5. [*Daily*] *Express*, 24 Oct. 1859.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, *Morning News*, 26 Oct. 1859; *The [?Catholic] Telegraph*, 12 Nov. 1859; *Morning News*, 18 Nov. 1859, 27 Jan. 1860.

<sup>41</sup>Letters from Archbishop Cullen, Rome, to Bishop Gillooly, 6 Nov. 1858, 31 Mar. 1859, printed in

It is fair to claim that Kavanagh was motivated by pique. Under these circumstances pauline conversions were to be expected. The hostile press was not slow to point out inconsistencies between the views now promulgated by Kavanagh and those, in defence of the national system, he had offered in evidence to the 1854 *Inquiry*.<sup>42</sup> Likewise, Archdeacon Stopford, who became embroiled in the controversy, suggested that Kavanagh had resigned on personal grounds rather than on principle.<sup>43</sup> Though Kavanagh's acknowledged expertise in mathematics allowed him to present his statistical findings in a light most favourable to the Board's detractors, E.R. Norman is guilty of overstatement in his claim that Kavanagh's work 'was riddled with errors'.<sup>44</sup> Due to the largely denominational character of the attendance at many of the ordinary national schools many of the defects to which he gave prominence were possible in theory only. Yet, his labours did not go unrewarded. By the 'unanimous vote' of the hierarchy, Kavanagh, eulogised for his 'noble sacrifice', was appointed to the chair of Mathematics in the Catholic University.<sup>45</sup>

Kavanagh's reputation was enduring. His impact as a witness to the Powis Commission ten years later further illustrated his capacity to influence events. It was such indeed that James Dease, one of the Royal Commissioners not hostile to denominational education, was prompted to suggest a most unusual solution to William Monsell, M.P., on 8 March 1869:

... you may remember our conversation turning (amongst other topics connected with the education question) on Mr. J.W. Kavanagh - and the great difficulties thrown in the way of a settlement of the Primary Educational arrangements of Ireland by that gentleman's position, and his influence with Cardinal Cullen and many others of the Catholic Bishops. You have probable heard from other quarters that Mr. Kavanagh is seeking an appointment as Inspector of Industrial and Reformatory Schools - an office in Ireland as yet non-existent. Between ourselves I should prefer seeing him provided for out of Ireland because I much fear that he will have influence enough to make any possible or practicable recommendation of our Commission unacceptable to the popular Catholic party in Ireland. He has the free entree of the *Freeman's Journal* and is now Irish correspondent of *The Tablet*, besides instructing the public from time to time in other journals... It would be most desirable that no adverse influence in the press or elsewhere should be let loose against our propositions - if such a thing can be avoided.

While appreciating the background to Kavanagh's position, Dease again returns to his suggestion, informing Monsell that he believed Kavanagh would be 'an unexceptionable Educational officer in any (shall I say colony?) place to which he might be appointed'.

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MacSuibhne, *Paul Cullen*, iii, 263.

<sup>42</sup>N.A.I., ED7/4: *Daily Express*, 4 May 1859. Directs reader to compare his answers to specific questions in 1854 and to the contrary opinions being expressed on listed pages of *The Catholic case stated*.

<sup>43</sup>*Powis*, iv, App. 18. pp 1312-15.

<sup>44</sup>E.R. Norman, *The Catholic Church and Ireland in the Age of Rebellion - 1859-1873* (London, 1965), pp 56-8.

<sup>45</sup>N.A.I., ED7/5: *The Nation*, 23 Oct. 1859.

In case the receiver was still in doubt as to the earnestness of the proposal, the writer, remarking that 'the Irish Chancellor is in London', made it clear to Monsell that he '[waived] the "Strictly Confidential"[character of his communication] in his favour alone'.<sup>46</sup>

Damning statistics alone were not sufficient to ring the changes. Archbishop Cullen proved adept at maximising the influence of sympathetic Irish members of parliament in both their public pronouncements and in their dealings with the administration. The close of the decade witnessed a period of intense activity in pressing Roman Catholic claims for control of education. Privately, Cullen wrote to Monsell in June 1859, setting out the minimum requirements to meet Roman Catholic demands. With regard to the national system, he was told it would have to be remodelled or reconstructed. The model schools were described as 'obnoxious', the rules against the Catholic religion as 'most offensive', and the representation of Roman Catholics on the Board as 'inadequate'.<sup>47</sup> William Monsell and fellow member of parliament J.F. Maguire were the leading proponents of the bishops' crusade. The latter named was acidly described as 'par excellence, the member of the Roman Catholic hierarchy'.<sup>48</sup> In August, the pastoral address of the bishops described model schools as 'especially objectionable'. At the meeting of the hierarchy in October 1859 it was decided to carry their resolutions into effect immediately, 'so far as in them lies'. 'These measures,' it was claimed, 'will paralyse the action of the National System and precipitate its final overthrow.'<sup>49</sup> They did not.

The memorial of the Roman Catholic prelates presented to the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Carlisle, in November 1859 complained of the 'systematic refusal to recognise their legitimate authority to direct and superintend the education of their flocks.' Despite the support of a number of M.P.s, the government held firm. The only concession was parity for Roman Catholics on the Board. This, the least that equity demanded, predictably aroused suspicions among hard-line supporters of the national system. The view of the *Daily Express* faithfully reflected their concern. Due to irregular attendance by Protestants at Board meetings, it contended that 'when Dr. Cullen gets two or three of his nominees appointed, he will take to have a majority always ready to vote what he wishes'.<sup>50</sup> Most certainly, failure by Protestant members to act in unison made it easier for Roman Catholic opinions to prevail, but by no stretch of the imagination could the Roman Catholic commissioners be described as 'placemen' of Archbishop Cullen.

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<sup>46</sup> James A. Dease to William Monsell. (N.L.I., Monsell Papers, MS 8317/4).

<sup>47</sup> Cullen to Monsell, (N.L.I., Monsell Papers, MS 8317/3).

<sup>48</sup> N.A.I., ED7/5: *Daily Express*, 16 Sept. 1859.

<sup>49</sup> N.A.I., ED7/4: *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Aug. 1859; ED7/5: *The Nation*, 23 Oct. 1859.

<sup>50</sup> N.A.I., ED7/5: *The Daily Express*, 17 Aug. 1860.

It was against the background of these significant shifts in power on the Board that district model schools in Enniscorthy, Sligo and Cork, along with Parsonstown Minor Model School, were established. In the cases of both the Enniscorthy and Sligo schools the implacably hostile attitude of the local Roman Catholic bishops was so effective that neither school could claim to have provided a meaningful level of united education. In Enniscorthy the Board's problems were compounded by the active opposition mounted by the Established Church. Not only did this have the effect of severely limiting the school's operation as a centre for elementary education, but it also threatened its role as a teacher preparatory school. In Parsonstown the opposition of the parish priest, Fr John Egan, was just as vigorous as that of his more senior colleagues. Despite his efforts, the support - both practical and overt - and influence of the Parsons family ensured that his success was more limited. In Cork, Bishop William Delany's response had to be somewhat more circumspect and covert. Dunmanway District Model School, which enjoyed unofficial toleration since it was essentially Roman Catholic both with regard to staff and pupils, was also in his diocese. This made it difficult for him to take a public stance on the issue. Consequently, Cork District Model School attracted a not insignificant attendance of Roman Catholics. Contrary to the general trend, this number showed a marked increase in the early 1870s, and by 1874 stood at twenty-four per cent. There was an accompanying decrease in the number of Protestants attending. These changes Edward Sheehy, the region's head inspector, attributed to two unrelated, if not contradictory, factors - the opening of a Protestant school in the area staffed by national teachers 'of considerable experience', and a realisation by Roman Catholics that model schools held out the prospect of a better education.<sup>51</sup>

The Sligo and Cork applications were brought to the Board's attention by means of well-supported memorials. That for Enniscorthy resulted, in part, from the rejection of an earlier application by the Wexford Town Poor Law Guardians. This unsuccessful application led the district inspector, H.P. Clarke, to investigate the possibility of establishing a district model school in Enniscorthy. The support of the Earl of Portsmouth, who was prepared 'to grant a lease of a suitable site on very reasonable terms' appeared to clinch the issue. Parsonstown, in a somewhat similar fashion, was proposed as a site by one of the Board's head inspectors, Dr William Newell, following a commitment by the Earl of Rosse to give a site on lease.<sup>52</sup>

Out of deference to Roman Catholic sensibilities, the first site offered in Parsonstown was turned down, 'owing to its proximity to the Convent School and Roman Catholic

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<sup>51</sup> C.N.E.I., *Forty-first report ... 1874*, Appendix, p. 66.

<sup>52</sup> *Powis* vii, Correspondence and minutes in reference to the establishment of Cork D.M.S. pp 114-5; Enniscorthy D.M.S. pp 118-21; Parsonstown M.M.S. p. 151; Sligo D.M.S. pp 152-9.

chapel'. The Board having secured an alternative site from the Earl of Rosse, the Reverend John Egan declared his principled opposition. The tone of his letter suggested that they should be already well aware that no Roman Catholic clergyman could sanction the establishment of a school over which he had no control. Unless changes in the management were effected, he assured them, in words that were to be echoed later by Bishop Furlong of Ferns, 'your money is very certain to be uselessly expended'. The reply of the commissioners - it too would be used again - was to the effect that the decision that had already been made was irrevocable.<sup>53</sup>

As the opening of the school approached in October 1860, it became apparent that Fr Egan's threat was not made lightly. Having failed to influence the Board, he appealed directly to his parishioners. The manner in which he sought to bring influence to bear on his captive audience was reported in lurid detail, albeit second-hand, by the *Morning News*:

One of the curates in the heat of his over zeal, stamped his feet on the altar, shook his clenched fist at the congregation, and dared them to attempt to send their children to the Model Schools. Several respectable and intelligent Roman Catholics are very indignant at the tone and mandatory terms in which they have been addressed; and although they disapprove of the course which their priests have adopted, yet such is their thralldom, that they are afraid to oppose their views. Father Egan and his coadjutors are fully aware of this, and since Sunday last have been going to the houses of their parishioners and warning them of the consequences, should they dare to disobey the commands of the Church...

Notwithstanding these efforts, the readers were assured that the model schools would ultimately succeed.<sup>54</sup> Initial indications were that the efforts of Fr. Egan and his curates were successful. On opening on 2 November 1860, there was an attendance of just fourteen.<sup>55</sup> However, this appears to have had little to do with the actions of the clergy, and was indicative more of a general tardiness to avail of the new school. Throughout 1861 the average daily attendance was 97.8. By the end of 1862 this had increased by a further forty per cent to 137.7. When broken down by denomination, the effect of the clerical campaign is readily apparent. In a town where seventy-eight per cent of the population were Roman Catholic, only twelve per cent of those enrolled were of that persuasion.<sup>56</sup> However, there was a steady increase to a high of forty-seven per cent in 1867. Thereafter it tended to fluctuate, and even survived for a while the opening of a rival Roman Catholic school for boys in 1869 before slipping back to twenty-six per cent in 1874.<sup>57</sup> The Parsonstown situation was not typical. It was the principal residence

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<sup>53</sup>Powis, vii, 151.

<sup>54</sup>N.A.I., ED7/5: *The Morning News*, 19 Oct. 1860, reprinting account in *Saunders's Newsletter*.

<sup>55</sup>M.C.N.E.I., 2 Nov. 1860.

<sup>56</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-ninth report ... 1862*, App. B., pp 31-2.

<sup>57</sup>See Annual Reports: 1866 - App. B., p. 79; 1869 - App. B., p. 120; 1871 - App. B., p. 123; 1874 - Appendix p. 79.

of a powerful gentry family that took a keen interest in local affairs. As employers and benefactors, their influence was considerable. Pitted against this influence was the authority of the local Roman Catholic clergy. Under the circumstances, it was unlikely that there would be a clear victor in the short-term with the Roman Catholic laity torn between two loyalties. In the struggle between clerical authority and secular patronage, it would seem that, in line with the general trend, when the former could provide alternative institutions, efficiently run, they would in time prevail.

Cork, judging by the Board documents, appeared to attract little controversy, with no record of Roman Catholic opposition. Officially, the greatest obstacle to its establishment was the difficulty experienced in locating a suitable site. However, evidence given to the Powis Commission suggests that early Roman Catholic support for a district model school was eroded by covert but incisive action on the part of Bishop William Delany. James Wilson, a barrister, who had served as a district inspector in the Dunmanway district in the second-half of the 1850s, recounted for the Commission a conversation which he had had with an acquaintance, '[Michael] Barry, Professor of Law in Queen's College, Cork' on the subject of the application. He was told that

Sir John Arnott instituted an agitation ... for the establishment of a model school in Cork ... and asked my friend to act as secretary for the Roman Catholics of Cork, in connexion with that agitation. My friend complied. He told me that 200 Roman Catholics in Cork signed a requisition to have the model school established; but before the requisition was forwarded, Dr. Delany ... came to Sir John Arnott, and induced him to withdraw his name from the requisition ...<sup>58</sup>

Arnott, then Mayor of Cork, did not withdraw his name. Instead, it would seem more likely that the pressure was applied not to have the Roman Catholic names submitted. When presented, the memorial contained the names of seventy-two signatories. If the above figure of 200 is even reasonably accurate, it is fair to claim that Delany's campaign was successful. Only the names of the twelve principal signatories are preserved. Of these, at least Sir Robert Kane and 'Michael R. Barry, Barrister', who was the source of the evidence related above, were Roman Catholics.<sup>59</sup> At the time, Cullen described the movement against mixed education in Cork as 'glorious', and was convinced that, if continued, 'it will be productive of great good'.<sup>60</sup> But Delany's position was difficult. Against Dunmanway, where the element of religious mixing was negligible, he was content to take no action. In Cork, a city with a combined Protestant population of sixteen per cent, it was likely that the school would have a mixed religious attendance. Given the attraction of model schools to the middle classes, the proportion

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<sup>58</sup>*Powis*, iii, 700.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, vii, 114.

<sup>60</sup>*MacSuibhne, Paul Cullen*, iii, 264. Archbishop Cullen to Bishop Gillooly.

of Protestants would be certainly even greater than that among the general population. In the case of Cork, episcopal authority was resisted by a significant minority of Roman Catholics. In spite of what was described as 'the unceasing hostility of the Catholic bishop and clergy', during the first year of opening, they accounted for twenty per cent of the enrolment.<sup>61</sup> Delany did not confine his efforts to persuading the laity not to support the model school. He also, unavailingly, attempted to influence the Board through a private representation to the Chief Secretary, Edward Cardwell, and sought the support of a number of sympathetic M.P.s. He was forced, in the end, to accept that the Board would not waver in its determination.<sup>62</sup>

The statistics relating to denominational attendance are difficult to reconcile with evidence given to the Powis Commission. While appearing to contradict the figures contained in the various annual *Reports*, the evidence of Inspector John Edward Sheridan provides a possible explanation. He claimed that a large proportion of the attendance at Cork were 'of the better class', with a number travelling daily, by rail, from as far away as Inishannon, Queenstown and Passage West. These had stepped in, he claimed, when the school was shunned by the Roman Catholics. James Wilson's evidence strongly suggested that the influence of the Roman Catholic clergy in the matter of education was less keenly felt by the professional class. A Roman Catholic barrister, J. Lowry Whittle, was of similar opinion.<sup>63</sup> It is possible, if not highly probable, that the opposition of Bishop Delany was effective only in influencing the attitude of lower class Roman Catholics towards the model school. His overall ambivalence ensured that his public stance would necessarily be muted, and thereby allow Cork's Roman Catholic propertied and professional class avail of the advantage of the model school. If anything, when judged on a class basis, Roman Catholics were probably over-represented among the enrolled. The problem facing Cork District Model School was not so much one of uniting the religions, but rather the classes.

Roman Catholic episcopal opposition in the cases of Sligo and Enniscorthy was strident and much more effective. These towns possessed neither a large body of the professional nor middle class who would resist interference, nor provided the anonymity of greater urban centres. Not under the same constraints as Bishop Delany, Laurence Gillooly, then coadjutor Bishop of Elphin, responded quickly to a November 1857 memorial seeking a district model school for Sligo 'signed by the Mayor and leading inhabitants'. Within a week of the original communication, the Board was informed of the withdrawal of the names of all the members of the Corporation, with the exception

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<sup>61</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-third report ... 1866*, App. B., p. 115.

<sup>62</sup>See Evelyn Bolster, *A history of the Diocese of Cork - the episcopate of William Delany, 1847 - 1886* (Cork, 1993), pp 188 - 90.

<sup>63</sup>*Powis*, iii, p. 252 (Sheridan) and p. 699 (Wilson); *Powis* iv, p.1077 (Whittle).

of four Protestants, along with the names of the other Roman Catholic memorialists. The reason given was the disapproval of the Roman Catholic bishop and clergy.<sup>64</sup> In light of these developments, a final decision by the Board was postponed pending the report of the district inspector, John W. Rodgers. His report, and a subsequent one drawn up conjointly with his superior, Head Inspector James Patten, are most interesting in so far as they give an insight into the thinking of the Board officers when faced with what might have been regarded by many as insuperable opposition. The views of the various clergy, unusually for this period, were sought and accurately reported. In general, those of the Established Church were said to be 'neutral, if not avowedly favourable'. The Roman Catholic clergy and some of the gentry (probably sympathetic to the Church Education Society) were understood to be opposed. Others of the gentry, and the Presbyterians - 'through whose means principally the memorial was got up' - along with a 'large number' of the laity of all denominations, 'may be regarded as decidedly friendly to the project'. The inspectors informed the Board that the crucial factor bearing on the success of the school would be the judicious selection of staff 'in consequence of the rivalry existing among the different religious bodies'. In conclusion, both were of the opinion that the establishment of a district model school would have the beneficial effect of winning over to the national system 'parties in this neighbourhood who have hitherto stood aloof from it.' On this basis the project was proceeded with.

The objections of Bishop Gillooly, however, were not to be summarily dismissed on the findings of Patten and Rodgers. When it appeared that the Board was close to finalising an agreement on site acquisition, Gillooly took his campaign a step further and formally complained. His letter highlighted the two principal objections. Firstly, Roman Catholic clergy could never accept schools 'over the teachers and teaching of which we could exercise no immediate or efficacious control'. Secondly, 'the entire Catholic body' was entitled to 'a system of unmixed education in accordance with our civil rights and religious interests'. In reply, the Board mounted a lame defence of its decision. The voting of money by parliament and the procurement of a suitable site, along with a '[full] consideration of all the circumstances of the case' were promoted as sufficient justification.

The dilemma faced by the Roman Catholic laity of the town is apparent from the letter of Peter O'Connor, a member of the town and harbour commissioners. On the one hand, he expressed the thanks of the Board for having decided to proceed with the model school. On the other, he informed them that the institution could not realise its full potential unless the objections of the bishop were overcome. Further correspondence,

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<sup>64</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 20, 27 Nov. 1857.



through George Mostyn, secretary to the town and harbour commissioners, indicated unequivocal support for the project, inclining one to the view that O'Connor's letter reflected more his own reservations than the official thinking of the local functionaries.<sup>65</sup>

The effectiveness of Gillooly's campaign was nowhere more resoundingly attested to than in the almost total refusal of Roman Catholics to support the Sligo District Model School. Despite the appointment of Roman Catholic teachers as principals to both the boys' and infants' departments, during the first year of its operation the school attracted a Roman Catholic enrolment of just 1 per cent. In the town itself, they accounted for 78 per cent of the population.<sup>66</sup>

In Enniscorthy, too, the attitude of the Roman Catholic bishop, Thomas Furlong was one of active opposition. The decision of the Board to go ahead with the erection of a district model school in Enniscorthy is difficult to fathom. It was Furlong's mensal parish. Kavanagh, in his capacity as a head inspector, had given early warning that it would be singularly unsuccessful. It also lacked the support of the clergy of the Established Church. It would seem that the offer of an eligible site from Lord Portsmouth was sufficient to convince the Board of its suitability. Kavanagh's serious misgivings were fully realised. During its first year of operation - 1863 - the school attracted an average daily attendance of just less than 52. While this by 1865 had reached 80, two years later it had slipped back to 60. Equally depressing was the level of religious mixing. In the first year Roman Catholics accounted for 15 per cent of those on rolls. Over the next four years the percentage slipped steadily until in 1867 it stood at just 7 per cent. The corresponding figure for the town of Enniscorthy was 87 per cent.<sup>67</sup> The appointment of Roman Catholic principals to both the Boys' and Infants' departments did nothing to counter clerical opposition. The only argument that Head Inspector W.A. Hunter could posit in its favour was entirely of a perverse kind. It had, he suggested, the potential to '[stimulate] efforts in rival establishments'.<sup>68</sup> The absence of reference to its training programme from 1869 onwards would suggest that it had been wisely abandoned.

The most interesting aspect of this case is the manner in which the Board dealt with the advice of Kavanagh and the objections of Bishop Furlong. Kavanagh, in moderate and succinct terms, informed the Board in August 1856 that Enniscorthy was 'not an

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<sup>65</sup>Powis vii. Correspondence relative to the establishment of a district model school in Sligo - pp 152-9.

<sup>66</sup>Staff appointments - *M.C.N.E.I.*, 31 July 1863; Average attendance by religious denomination - *C.N.E.I., Thirty-first Report ... 1864*, App. B., p. 69; General population by religious denomination - *Powis* vii, 78.

<sup>67</sup>*Powis* vii, 86.

<sup>68</sup>*C.N.E.I., Twenty-ninth report ... 1862*, App. B., p. 80.

encouraging site for a District Model School'. Significantly, he reminded the commissioners that the proposed Wexford project had to be abandoned because of Roman Catholic clerical opposition<sup>69</sup> - a contention that cannot be squared with surviving Board records. Evidence, however, from the local press would support Kavanagh's claim.<sup>70</sup> Later, in terms far from temperate, he would impugn the motives of the district inspector who handled this particular application.<sup>71</sup> In reply, the Board intimated that, having entered into an agreement with Lord Portsmouth regarding a site, and in the knowledge that many influential persons had promised support, 'they cannot now recede from their engagements'.<sup>72</sup> There was an element of wilful misrepresentation involved here as the lease on the site was not signed for another two years.<sup>73</sup>

Kavanagh's oft-times tempestuous relationship with his employers may have influenced the Board in assessing the weight of his argument. In mitigation, no such excuse could be advanced for the almost contemptuous nature of its response to the representations of Bishop Furlong and the cavalier tone of its reply. Furlong's letter of December, 1859, clearly pointed out to the commissioners the sufficiency of educational institutions already in operation in Enniscorthy. He reminded them further, that model schools, which by the terms of their constitution '[rejected] all episcopal control', were now 'emphatically condemned' by a 'united Catholic episcopacy'. In sum, he objected

to the establishment of a model school in Enniscorthy as a wanton waste of public money - as an act of defiance to the Catholic bishop of the diocese, and the clergy and people who share his sentiments, and a premeditated aggression on the jurisdiction and authority that rightfully belongs to him.

In reply, asserting their perceived primacy in this matter, Bishop Furlong was informed that the commissioners would establish schools where they believed they were required, 'notwithstanding the want of concurrence' on the part of clergy of any denomination. A further lengthy letter followed from Furlong, in which he pointed up a number of inconsistencies in the Board's account of its arrival at the decision to opt for Enniscorthy. As a parting salvo, Bishop Furlong assured the commissioners

that the proposed model school, with all its attractions, will not lure [the faithful] from their fidelity to their pastors - and that with the Divine blessing not one Catholic child shall ever cross its threshold.

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<sup>69</sup> Powis, iv, 837. Letter is reproduced in its entirety.

<sup>70</sup> N.A.I., ED7/3: *Wexford People*, 26 Jan. 1856.

<sup>71</sup> [J.W. Kavanagh], *The Catholic case stated*, p.195.

<sup>72</sup> Powis vii, 119.

<sup>73</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 13 Aug. 1858.

An insouciant acknowledgement concluded the correspondence relating to the establishment of Enniscorthy District Model School.<sup>74</sup>

The rate at which the interest of the Board in united secular education at the level of the model school waned was inversely proportional to the gathering momentum of the efforts of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to ensure their rejection by Catholics. This was in keeping with the hierarchy's unswerving belief that institutions which adhered to united secular education as a fundamental tenet could not be tolerated as suitable seminaries for the preparatory training of teachers. As early as 1858 Keenan had alerted the Board to the problem. He pointed out that an inequality in the geographical distribution of model schools was further compounded by their influence being limited to their immediate localities. He was of the opinion that 'the number of existing model schools is wholly inadequate to the wants of the country'. While he did not explicitly advert to the growing opposition to model schools, he recommended to the Board that private enterprise be entrusted with the task of extending the number, '[establishing] them wherever philanthropy would suggest or local circumstances show, that they might be required'. The nature of the Board's response as recorded in the *Minutes* was one of brusque dismissal.<sup>75</sup>

The emerging cohesiveness on the part of the Roman Catholic hierarchy would ensure that the matter would come again before the Board, and that Catholic objections could no longer be dismissed in such an arbitrary or autocratic manner. For one thing, fundamentalist Protestants were in an increasingly isolated position within the Board. Secondly, by May, 1862 an agreed position among the Roman Catholic hierarchy had been arrived at. This advocated the complete boycotting of the model schools as training institutes:

That convinced of the importance of Catholic teachers being trained only in Catholic model schools, we direct that no priest shall, after the first day of next term, send any person to be trained as a teacher, either in the central model school, or in any other model school ... and that no teachers who shall be sent to be trained after that date in any model school shall be employed as such by any priest, or with his consent.

That in consequence of the gradual development of the evil tendencies of the model schools ... we direct that priests or religious shall not hereafter visit such schools even for the purposes of religious instruction or examination, nor otherwise countenance in any way the attendance at them of Catholic children.<sup>76</sup>

This proscription added greatly to the pressure being brought to bear on the government. While it did not immediately have a dramatic effect on the enrolment of Roman

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<sup>74</sup>*Powis* vii, 118-21.

<sup>75</sup>*Powis*, iv, App. 17, pp 1311-12.

<sup>76</sup>*Resolutions adopted by the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland 6-9 May 1862*, (N.L.I., Larcom Papers, MS 7651.)

Catholic candidate teachers in the model schools, where implemented, it had serious ramifications as regards their employability.

With the celebrated letter to the home secretary, Sir George Grey, in January 1866, the protestations of the Irish Catholic hierarchy reached a crescendo. This communication, signed by twenty-nine of the hierarchy, comprehensively stated the fundamental objections the bishops had to the national system. On model schools - 'by far the most objectionable part of the system' - there was no room for compromise. '[Do] away with them altogether' was the unambiguous affirmation. This was justified on three grounds. They could not be justified on the grounds of cost to the public. They had been established in spite of the known objections of the episcopacy and maintained in defiance of its authority. The third point, which will be afforded later consideration, claimed that both the teachers in the model schools and other officers of the Board, directed their every effort 'to incite Catholic pupils and the parents of Catholic pupils to schismatical acts of insubordination against Catholic priests and Catholic bishops'. As to what should become of the physical structures, their Lordships had not reached firm conclusions. Some they believed could be turned into denominational training schools, others would be suitable as reformatories, with the remainder to be 'utilised in some other way'. Interestingly, in this exercise in excoriation, there was no criticism of the standard of education or preparatory teacher training in these institutions.<sup>77</sup>

The Board, having been acquainted of the letter's content by the office of the home secretary, declined to engage on the issue, claiming, that as an administrative body, its function was 'to act and not to argue'. It limited its observations to its belief that the policy pursued heretofore '[was as] wise and sound, as it had been successful'.<sup>78</sup> This outward rejection belied a growing internal concern. In May, 1866, a major concession was made to the Roman Catholic bishops. The rule governing religious instruction was altered. In effect, the divisive 'Stopford Rule' was set aside in favour of the pre-1855 position despite the opposition of the Presbyterians on the Board, James Gibson and the Reverend Drs Henry and Hall. Also changed was the rule which limited promotion to the highest class of teachers to those who had been trained at the Central Establishment in Marlborough Street. This recognised the financial disadvantage in which many Roman Catholic teachers found themselves. More importantly, it tended to undermine the status of the Training Establishment. To this, too, Gibson dissented.<sup>79</sup>

The most radical changes were those in relation to training. These were contained in a letter of the then chief secretary, Chichester Fortescue, in June of that year. They were a

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<sup>77</sup> Powis, i, 185-7. Letter is reprinted in full.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

clear attempt to ameliorate the effects of the bishops' prohibition through reaching an accommodation with them. In reviewing the state of affairs, the Irish administration was firmly of the view that neither the existing model schools nor the training establishment could meet requirements. Nine-hundred newly trained teachers were, it was believed, required annually. At most 400 were being provided. In a system where 58 per cent of the 7,472 teachers were untrained, the present provision would never redress the situation. At last, the Government explicitly acknowledged that the attitude of the Roman Catholic clergy would absolutely preclude any further extension of the scheme of model schools under the Board's exclusive management. The solution to the problem it believed was the resurrection of Head Inspector Keenan's plan for non-vested model schools. Rejected in a peremptory fashion when submitted by one of its senior officers, the Board would now have to revisit the issue. The second time round it was never likely that it could be hastily set aside. The changed religious balance on the Board and a strong indication from the government of the need for accommodation favoured its adoption.

Besides the issue of model schools, Fortescue's letter also alerted the Board to the government's belief that new arrangements for the boarding and supervision of teachers in training should be considered. It proposed that the option of boarding out, in lodgings sanctioned by the commissioners, should be available. Implicit in this was a recognition that it would operate in a denominational fashion. As a further confidence measure, the government saw a need to appoint chaplains to the training establishment. Extraneous to the main thrust of the letter, though in line with developments in Britain, was the government preference for a system of payment by results.<sup>80</sup>

The initial Board response was cautious. While the letter received their 'general approbation', the commissioners did not commit themselves to adopting 'any particular details', and suggested that any changes which might be made could not be in conflict with 'the fundamental principles of united secular education'.<sup>81</sup> The tardiness that the Board exhibited in grappling with the 'particular details' dispels the notion of unity conveyed by the reply. By mid-November further procrastination was not possible. The resident commissioner required instructions from the Board as to what provision should be made in the estimate for the coming year 'for the several matters proposed in Mr. Fortescue's letter'. No decision was taken, but at the following meeting of 20 November the dissent of Commissioner William Higgin, Bishop of Derry was recorded. This protest, submitted in writing, led to the deferral of the matter until the 27th. At this meeting, the passage of the non-contentious items - provision for boarding out and

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<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, pp 189-91.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, Minute of Board Meeting 30 June 1866, p.191.

appointment of chaplains - was successfully negotiated. The meeting, three days later, on the question of the new schools being under local management, ended in a division, with six in favour and three against. Of those who voted against, the Presbyterians Hall and Gibson were joined by James Murland, a Unitarian. Of those in favour, four of the six were Roman Catholic, and two of the Established Church. This willingness by certain Anglicans, prompted by pragmatism or toleration, or both, to seek accommodation with their fellow Roman Catholic commissioners, effectively isolated the more fundamentalist Protestants.

For the Board the defence of the principle of united secular education had become more trouble than it was worth. For the magnates within the Roman Catholic Church it was long regarded as a pernicious chimera. The progress they had made in providing alternative denominational institutes in direct opposition to the Board's model schools allowed them press more strongly for their total repudiation. A series of unfavourable political developments resulted, initially, in the Fortescue recommendations not being implemented, and the stymying of later initiatives. It was not until 1883 that a workable solution was given government sanction. The seventeen-year interlude was equal in duration to the time the model schools had been in operation up to 1866. Nevertheless, such was the predictability of the outcome, it provides but an epilogue to the brief and fateful experiment with model schools in their role as exemplars of the national system, and meaningful centres both of mixed education and as seminaries for the preparatory training of teachers.

**PART THREE**

**THE MODEL SCHOOLS**

**AND**

**TEACHER EDUCATION**

## Selection of Junior Staff

It was the Board's intention that the criteria governing selection to the ranks of model school junior staff, whether as pupil teachers or paid monitors, would be the achievement of a certain minimum academic standard, assessed by examination, and a high standard of moral probity, attested to by written references from an appropriate clergyman. Factors, socio-economic and religious - many of which were beyond the control of the Board and its inspectors - determined that a less than rigid application of the Board's regulations had to be adopted in order to ensure a sufficiency of junior staff in individual model schools. The resultant flexibility fashioned a selection process based more on pragmatism than precept.

### ***7.1 The Selection Process***

In 1857, in his inaugural report on Belfast District Model School, the head inspector, P.J. Keenan, encapsulated the thinking of the Board and its officers in relation to training under a model school system. He described the requirements, both moral and academic, possessed by suitable candidates, adverted to the beneficial effect of the course of training in raising the professional status of teachers, and rejoiced in the consequent rise in their social standing in the community. Specifically, he argued that no system of training could be envisaged that did not have recourse to model schools. 'They are the depots, the recruiting and drilling ground of the teaching staff of the country', he averred. To be of greatest efficacy the training of the pupil teachers and paid monitors, who formed the junior staff of the model school, had to commence

at that period in the age of youth when habits are easiest formed, tastes most easily cultivated, the mind most easily subjected to discipline, and study most easily and profitably pursued.

Keenan believed that during the course of training the student should develop the art of communication, become adept at the management of 'large assemblages of children', acquire a knowledge of the principles of education, have the opportunity to test their 'truth and efficacy', and to become familiar with the bases of the 'economy of method and order'. Furthermore, he drew attention to the desired effects of training on the student's social development, hinting at its implications with respect to expectations: 'it gives them official habits; and it familiarises them with the details, the pleasures, and even the difficulties of their future laborious avocations'.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fourth report ... 1857*, App. A, p. 68.



In his public address at the school's opening ceremony in the same year, Keenan highlighted for his distinguished audience the incongruous situation then pertaining with regard to teacher training when compared to the care taken with the acquisition of manual skills. The contradictions were glaring. Teaching, as a profession, he believed, was 'to a great extent' regarded as a 'haphazard, adventurous sort of education', or as a 'last resource'. Certificates of competency or training were not required. Yet, 'society' demanded that those entering 'the simplest and rudest trades' served an apprenticeship in order to achieve acceptance as a 'skilled member of a guild'. The absence of a similar requirement with respect to teachers he deemed reckless in view of the crucial role of the teacher in giving 'directions to the young growth of the intellect, and the young development of the affections'. This 'delicate and important duty' was too often undertaken 'upon chance' by one 'who knows nothing of its nature or consequence'. Addressing the fallacy that those who possessed knowledge were innately equipped with an ability to communicate it, Keenan stressed the need for training in the 'didactic art'. This he saw as transcending a mere facility in communication. It encompassed the fostering of the child's social development, which necessitated the fashioning of mental discipline, the inculcation of 'principles of humanity and virtue', the formation of habits, and the cultivation of 'refined tastes'. The assembly was assured that the Continental experience was such that 'the training principle ... ceases to be a question of speculation, and is become the key-stone and the life of every system of popular education'.

The statistics cited by Keenan pertaining to the efforts of the Board to provide trained teachers for the national school system certainly gave little cause for comfort. Since its inception, 'upwards of 5,000' teachers had been certificated, of whom 'scarcely 3,000' remained in service. Attrition over the period, attributable to death, emigration, and engagement in other, more lucrative, employments, meant that upwards of 2,000 of the system's 5,192 schools were still in the charge of teachers, 'to say the least of it, ... only imperfectly qualified'. Moreover, current training arrangements were insufficient to bring this unacceptable situation to an end. The continued expansion of the national system resulted in 'no less than 900' vacancies annually. Of the 'probationers' presenting themselves for employment, a large proportion was rejected at the initial classification examination 'for the want of qualification'. Of those eligible to be admitted to training, a maximum of only 350 could be accommodated annually. This, Keenan argued, could be remedied only through the extension of the training system.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

The Board had long been aware of the difficult challenge it faced in eradicating the problem of the untrained teacher. Initially, it had sought to provide a minimal amount of training for a maximum number of practising teachers. The failure to proceed with the 'nine year plan' advanced in the 1835 *Report* had prompted the commissioners to focus their energies on raising the standard of the candidate teacher seeking recognition. To this end, the commissioners instituted a scheme of paid monitorships in 1845. Initially, ninety-six candidates were selected by the local inspectors - three from the best schools in each of the thirty-two districts - to commence a four-year course that would prepare them to embark on a course of training at the Central Training Establishment before taking up posts as 'qualified' national teachers. It was expected that the number selected would be increased as circumstances permitted.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, in 1846 the number per district was doubled, with two of the six places reserved for females. By 1851, it stood at twelve in each district, with roughly the same gender proportion, and in 1852 the number was increased still further by the admission of a further 264 countrywide. In parallel with this, in March 1847, the professors were directed by the Board to draw up a course of study for the paid monitors. In May of the same year it was decided that the candidates would be selected by public examination, to be held in the various district model schools as they came into operation.<sup>4</sup> More fundamentally, the confidence that the Board took from the development of its network of model schools prompted a re-assessment of the status of the paid monitor. The emergence of the district model school between that of the ordinary national school and the Dublin training institute had the effect of denying the paid monitor right of immediate access to Marlborough Street. Monitors were to undertake a 'preliminary' course of training in the district model schools. Mastery of the prescribed course for paid monitors thus became the entry requirement for candidate teachers in the district model school.

With the inception of the 'preliminary' course for pupil teachers in the district model schools, the commissioners believed they had in place a comprehensive scheme of training substantially comparable to that launched in England.<sup>5</sup> There, under the influence of Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth - 'the first great English educational administrator' - the need to improve both the quality and supply of trained teachers had prompted rapid advances in the 1830s. Kay-Shuttleworth's earliest effort to establish a training college, having as its central feature a 'Normal School' where those in training honed their teaching skills, proved stillborn due to the opposition of religious interests. In an attempt to overcome this obstacle, he founded his own training college at Battersea in 1840. Its success was such that it became a model for a network of similar institutions throughout England. As secretary of the committee of the Privy Council on education,

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<sup>3</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twelfth Report ... 1845*, p.307.

<sup>4</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 15 Sept. 1846, 18 Mar., 20 May 1847, 20 Mar. 1851, 17 Dec. 1852.

<sup>5</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirteenth report ... 1846*, p. 10.

Kay-Shuttleworth was enabled in 1846 to devise and implement the scheme of training for pupil teachers which was to become the main source of candidates for the newly founded training colleges. Pupil teachers were selected from the ranks of able pupils aged thirteen years and over. They underwent a five-year apprenticeship with approved teachers, and were subject to an annual inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectors. Satisfactory progress was encouraged (and rewarded) through the payment of a small stipend to the pupil teacher, with his/her mentor receiving a supplement to salary. On completing an end of course examination, they were offered Queen's Scholarships to finance the completion of their training at one of the new residential denominational colleges, which numbered twenty-two in 1845. By 1850, there were 4,190 pupil teachers in training under the scheme. By 1860, this figure had climbed to 13,237. So crucial were they to the operation of the elementary education system that they were described by that other great English educationalist, Matthew Arnold, as 'the sinews of English public instruction'.<sup>6</sup>

As this approach indicates the arrangements for training in both jurisdictions differed in a number of fundamental respects. The establishment in England of a district model school network was not considered. Instead, energies were directed to the creation of a number of regional residential training colleges of similar purpose to the central training department in Dublin. The Irish system, *de jure* at least, was multi-denominational, whereas that being put in place in England was wholly denominational. In England, the full course of preliminary training could be given in any ordinary school which achieved a certain standard. In Ireland, only the most elementary stage of training was entrusted to the general body of national teachers. In England, there was an unbroken link between time spent in training as a pupil teacher and entry to a regional training college, whereas in Ireland the pupil teacher who successfully completed the 'preliminary' programme was expected to spend the two years as a practising national teacher before admission to the central training college. The experience thereby acquired was viewed as 'highly important' for the proper classification of the candidate. Otherwise, there was the risk of equating the first class scholar with the first class teacher. The perceived wisdom at the time was unambiguously expressed by the Reverend John McGauley, Professor of Training: 'our most effective teachers are frequently found in the *second* class', in other words, there was no perceived correlation between high academic achievement and success as a teacher.<sup>7</sup> Professionally, the defining difference was the requirement that there be one means of entry - completion of a structured course of apprenticeship. In Ireland, the network of model schools failed to win and to maintain the confidence of a significant majority of the powerful clerical management interests. This ensured that

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<sup>6</sup>This outline is taken from P.W. Musgrave, *Society and education in England since 1800* (London, 1968), pp 21-4.

<sup>7</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-second report ... 1855*, App. G, p. 172.

alternative means of, and less exacting standards for, entry, that operated to the detriment of the teacher's status, not only survived but flourished.

Candidates who presented themselves for selection as pupil teachers, academic attainments apart, were expected to meet a number of criteria. They were to be in good health and not younger than sixteen nor older than twenty years of age. Certificates attesting to their moral probity were to be provided by their respective clergymen. A desire and an aptitude for teaching were also seen as necessary.

On the face of it, the course material for the entrance examination appeared both extensive and detailed. However, based as it was on the paid monitor programme of the ordinary national schools and the Board's own publications, it must have been familiar to any candidate who entertained prospects of success. It involved both oral and written tests, as well as competency in teaching. Candidates were expected to be able:

- To read with ease and expression; and to have some knowledge of the principles of elocution, as explained in the first part of the Introduction to the Art of Reading
- To write out with correct spelling and punctuation the substance of a short lesson selected from any of the Lesson Books, and read slowly to them twice over
- To write with a good current hand, and be competent to superintend the writing of the junior classes
- To parse and analyse any passage selected from the National Lesson Books
- To know the general Geography of the great divisions of the Globe, and be familiar with the principles of Mathematical and Physical Geography
- To exhibit readiness in mental calculations; to solve questions in Compound Proportion, Fractions, and Commercial Arithmetic, and be familiar with the principles involved in the rules and processes employed by them
- To be acquainted with prefixes and affixes, and the principal Greek and Latin roots
- To be able to examine with a fair degree of efficiency, on any Reading Lesson selected, children of the third class; and competent to teach the rudiments of Arithmetic to the Junior pupils
- To know the first four sets contained in the Board's treatise on Book-keeping
- To know the First and Second Books of Geometry, with the exercises thereon, as given in Thompson's treatise
- To be acquainted with the elementary rules in Algebra, and able to solve questions in Simple Equations
- To know the rules for the measurement of Plane Surfaces, and principles on which these rules depend
- To be prepared for examination on the subjects treated of in :- Spelling Book Superseded; Geography Generalised (first eight Chapters); Lessons on Money Matters; Lessons on Reasoning (First part); National Lesson Books to the Fourth, inclusive; Fifth lesson Book (third, fourth, and fifth Sections); Agricultural Class Book<sup>8</sup>

Candidates for the monitress-ships were required also to know 'such parts of this course as [were] appropriate to females'.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, Appendix, p. 203.

<sup>9</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fourth report ... 1857*, App. A. p. 66.

The manner in which appointments were made in the six district model schools that were part of the first phase of the network indicates that not all regulations were accorded the same degree of weight. The requirement to maintain the intra-staff religious balance that had been decided upon prior to the school's opening was of foremost concern. Furthermore, while it cannot be said that preference was given to those who had come through the national system, candidates from this quarter were at a distinct advantage. The academic entry requirements, while not exceptional, were found to be beyond the attainment of many candidates due to want of proper preparation. Arising out of this, the Board's officers were afforded a degree of latitude. Candidates were not invariably examined in the complete prescribed course, and, where standards were not reached, appointments were made on the basis of potential. This had obvious implications for the candidate teacher in training. In order to achieve classification the student had to be successful in the end of course examinations. These were the same as those taken by 'probationary' teachers, that is those who were untrained and had not as yet been classified. Needless to say, they were of a more advanced standard than the entrance tests. Thus, for many of the candidate teachers, instruction in the model schools was aimed at raising their academic standards rather than providing them with a solid foundation in the theory and practicalities of teaching. This was not without repercussion. In his report on Trim District Model School in 1853, Head Inspector Edward Butler expressed the opinion that the inexperience of the candidates 'in the art of teaching' had a detrimental impact on the school in general, with the pupil teachers requiring from the head master, 'even during school hours, so continuous a superintendence as to prevent him perhaps from giving to any class its due share of attention'.<sup>10</sup>

In Ballymena, the complement of eight pupil teachers was selected in two stages, six months apart, forming a senior and junior division. This approach, William M'Creedy, the head inspector, believed would lead to the smoother operation of the institution. The candidates coming forward for selection in 1849 were 'generally ... drawn from the paid monitors of our ordinary schools, or chosen from among their most distinguished pupils'. M'Creedy also reported that in some instances the candidates were practising teachers. Selection was made on the basis of an examination in the prescribed course. The Board deferred, as a matter of expediency, the appointment of female pupil teachers opting instead to provide the schools with paid monitresses at the same rate as those employed in the ordinary national schools. Of the four appointed to Ballymena, the head inspector described their qualifications as 'much superior' to those in the common schools.

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<sup>10</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twentieth report ... 1853*, App. G, p. 40.

M'Creedy's account of the selection of junior staff to Newry District Model School is distinctly more illuminating. While accepting that the programme set down was not of too high a standard - '[requiring] of them nothing but what is expected of a paid monitor of four years' standing, or what is possessed by many of the advanced pupils in good National schools' - he did not believe it should be insisted upon as a minimum requirement. If enforced, he feared that

many a deserving young man with fair abilities, with a desire and a capacity to learn, with good amiable dispositions - in a word, to use a homely expression, with all the makings of a good master - would be ... lost to a profession towards which he had long felt a strong inclination.

M'Creedy's opinion was that, since the programme formed the basis of the syllabus of instruction for the pupil teachers while in the model school, it should be viewed as the ultimate ideal rather than a basic standard 'to be rigidly enforced at the outset'.<sup>11</sup> The adoption of this position suggests that the academic calibre of the candidates did not match the expectations of the commissioners, or, more correctly, their advisers, the professors of the central training department. Given this context, the inspectorate was left with little option but to select on the basis of potential. In Newry, of those selected, only one met their criteria; the others were chosen 'not for their own merits, but, in a measure, owing to the deficiencies of their competitors'.

An additional limiting factor was the patent lack of interest in the positions offered. On account of this, appeals were made to inspectors in the neighbouring districts to encourage suitable applicants to come forward, but just seven candidates presented themselves at the initial selection stage in May 1849. At the December examination the number stood at eleven. M'Creedy was very optimistic, nonetheless, as he forecast that the efforts of his brother inspectors would bear fruit, and anticipated that 'on future occasions the number of applicants will be larger, and that their age and general fitness will be nearer the desired standard'. An interesting feature of the Newry selection process, one which allowed the inspector an opportunity of gauging the worth of the candidate, while obviating the need to examine in all aspects of the prescribed course, was the requirement that the applicant furnish a statement 'written by himself, of his acquirements, occupation, age, and views in offering himself for the situation'. This was in addition to the provision of certificates from a clergyman of his own faith, from the manager and teacher of the school which he had last attended, and written parental consent.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, App. B, p. 197.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 199.

As the experience of selecting junior staff at Ballymena and Newry attests, inspectors reacted to the situation as they found it. This can be illustrated further by reference to the manner in which appointments were made in Trim District Model School. 'Considerable competition' for the positions of paid monitresses from candidates who had attended schools in the neighbourhood, 'National or not', prompted the inspector, William M'Creedy, to select by public examination. It also allowed him to choose older candidates for the posts, generally over sixteen years of age. Examinations were also held for the selection of pupil teachers with the candidates chiefly, though not exclusively, from national schools. These were admitted 'after a careful examination in the course prescribed by the commissioners'.<sup>13</sup> This competition for places notwithstanding, the calibre of the candidates was less than satisfactory. Their knowledge of 'many of the subjects [was] ... not only limited, but very imperfect'. M'Creedy did, though, assure the commissioners that at each examination he could perceive

a marked improvement in their answering, a greater amount of intelligence and a readiness in expressing their ideas, which, either from inability or an awkward reserve of manner, they did not at first possess.<sup>14</sup>

J.W. Kavanagh was similarly confident of the salutary effect the course of training would have on candidates who did not initially meet the requirements. In Bailieborough, he and District Inspector H.P. Clarke examined the 'considerable' number who presented themselves for the two positions as pupil teachers and paid monitresses on the day the school opened in May 1849. For the pupil teacherships they selected one who had served four years as paid monitor, and one who had been educated in a national school. Of those selected for the office of paid monitor, one was the sister of a National teacher and the other a daughter of a National teacher. Significantly, the inspectors admitted that the qualifications of those chosen were 'somewhat below those required by the Programme'. However, they felt certain that 'in a very short period they will be qualified in all respects'.

Kavanagh also oversaw the appointment of junior staff to Clonmel District Model School. The number of candidates presenting for the office of pupil teacher was described as 'very considerable', and though no detail is given of the type of examination held, it is clear that, as with Bailieborough, the four successful applicants were well acquainted with the national system. All four 'had been pupils of national schools from their childhood'. One had served the full four years as a paid monitor, and two had been paid assistant teachers. In January 1850 a further four were appointed

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<sup>13</sup>C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, App. B, pp 93-4.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 107.

bringing the number to the allotted complement. Of these, two were paid monitors, one had acted as assistant to his father, a teacher of a national school in the Clonmel area, and the fourth was a pupil of the model school itself. Four paid monitresses, of unknown background, were appointed during the same period. An unusual feature of the Clonmel school was the attendance, at their own expense, of a number of practising teachers in the area, for the purpose of training, which was provided *gratis*. Of the eight in this category, all but one were females. A further three teachers of national schools in the town took instruction in singing, and it was anticipated that they would introduce vocal music as a subject in their respective schools following the completion of the course.<sup>15</sup>

Appointments to Dunmanway District Model School were handled by Head Inspector James Patten. No information is available either to the form of the examination undergone by the candidates or to their intellectual capabilities. The main concern was, as in Bailieborough, to abide by the agreed denominational proportions of one Protestant to three Roman Catholics. With regard to the monitresses this does not appear to have caused difficulty. The successful Protestant candidate had received her education at the 'church school' in the town. The selection of the pupil teachers was not so straightforward as either no Protestant presented himself for consideration or those who did were hopelessly below the standard demanded. Subsequently, a young man, 'from the neighbourhood of Bandon,' was appointed, apparently on recommendation rather than examination. This arrangement proved to be of short duration. Pressure from the local Church Education Society resulted in the withdrawal of the Protestant pupil teacher. To meet its requirements the Board was obliged to provide suitable candidates from other parts of the country.<sup>16</sup>

### 7.2 Economic difficulties encountered

Problems encountered in securing junior staff in a number of the district model schools were due less to the Board's own entry standards and regulations, than to more powerful external influences, economic and religious. Throughout the period these were the primary agents responsible for depriving the model schools of an adequate supply of suitable trainees. Clonmel, Dunmanway, Trim, Newry, Ballymena, and Athy all reported problems in maintaining a full complement of junior staff in the early 1850s - a period when there was no concerted effort to have Roman Catholics repudiate the Board's training scheme. Difficulties arising from economic factors were both chronic and endemic. Their effect was felt in schools situated in both rural areas and large urban centres, and were distinctly more pronounced with regard to males. While the Board could attempt to address the economic issue, the religious problem, as raised by the

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<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 260.

<sup>16</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 13, 27 Sept. 1849, 7 Feb. 1850, 5 Mar. 1852.



Roman Catholic church, was to prove intractable. Its objections had nothing to do with the practical operation of the schools as training centres. They had all to do with control.

The situation in Clonmel was typical of that applying outside of the major conurbations. Owing to the poverty of the town and its hinterland, J. W. Kavanagh reported that few children from the social strata from which one might expect to draw candidate teachers remained long enough at school to be considered suitable for selection. The consequence of this was twofold. Firstly, district inspectors appointed boys to the office of paid monitor 'who [were] in too many cases *far below the prescribed attainments*', with the result that very few of them attained the qualifications required for appointment as pupil teachers. This scarcity of suitable candidates from the intended social class in Clonmel resulted in 'the brothers and sons of medical men, the grandsons of clergymen, the sons and daughters of comfortable shopkeepers and higher mechanics' being appointed to the junior staff. The implications of this were obvious. The training function of the school was undermined because the junior staff, drawn from the professional and lower middle classes, would never take up the position of a humble national school teacher. Kavanagh warned that if this situation were suffered to continue that the school would become in effect an elitist institution and serve neither the needs nor the hopes of the 'humble millions' for whom it was intended.<sup>17</sup>

Head Inspector Butler reported a different problem in obtaining properly prepared candidates for the Trim school. Here, the school was not patronised by the upper classes. While no difficulty was experienced in filling the position of paid monitor from among the 'humbler grades' on account of the modest incremental allowances, ranging from £6 to £12 over the course of four years, the failure to pay a discrete annual stipend to pupil teachers, as opposed to free board and lodging, made it difficult to attract candidates of the required calibre. Butler made two suggestions that were eventually acted upon by the Board. In order to overcome the problem of poorly prepared candidates he suggested that the course of training be extended from one to two years, allowing adequate time both for teacher training and instruction. At the request of the inspector this had already been allowed in the case of one individual in 1851. This was not to be regarded as a precedent, but similar requests from Ballymena, Clonmel, Dunmanway, Galway, Newry, and West Dublin were treated favourably.<sup>18</sup> In the case of Ballymena the pupil teacher concerned was described as being retained 'for the advantage of the institution', and a later multiple application regarding Trim school resulted in sanction being given for the retention of three pupil teachers. Butler's second recommendation attempted to address the economically disadvantaged situation in which the pupil teacher found

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<sup>17</sup>C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, App. B, p. 173.

<sup>18</sup>M.C.N.E.I., 10 Oct. 1851, 12 Feb., 19 Nov., 10 Dec. 1852, 18 Mar., 4 Nov., 16 Dec. 1853, 7 Apr. 7 July 1854.

himself *vis-à-vis* that of the paid monitor. Considering the humble background of the majority of pupil teachers, the inspector asked the Board to consider the payment of 'some small annual allowance' that would relieve the burden on their parents particularly with regard to outfitting.<sup>19</sup> The Board responded favourably to the first suggestion, and partially addressed the second, awarding a good service gratuity of £6 for those pupil teachers retained for the second year.

The failure to provide increased residential accommodation in the district model schools following the extension of the course had the very immediate effect of reducing the size of the annual cohort of those undergoing 'preliminary' training. It appears also that the modest stipend awarded, payable only during the second year, attracted few additional candidate teachers to the district model schools as Edward Butler observed when he revisited the issue in his report on Ballymena District Model School in 1853. Firstly, he pointed out that 'young persons of fair abilities', by the time they had reached the ages of sixteen or seventeen, already had many opportunities of employment 'offering them pecuniary prospects which they can have no hope of realising under the Board'. Moreover, those who were inclined to adopt teaching as a profession, were little attracted to the idea of spending a year without pay as a pupil teacher especially when the entry requirements to the district model school were higher than those required for classification as a teacher of the Third Class.<sup>20</sup> Butler believed that while all appreciated the benefit of 'previous preparation for their business', family circumstances did not allow them the luxury of training as pupil-teachers. On this occasion, he suggested that a similar provision to that which applied to those teachers in training in Marlborough Street - a small weekly allowance - be made for pupil teachers in deserving circumstances in the district model schools.<sup>21</sup>

Keenan, too, was much concerned by economic factors. He attributed the difficulties encountered to the low regard in which teaching, as a means of livelihood, was viewed historically. Parents, he claimed, regarded it as an occupation 'in which success was hazardous and reward incommensurate', and one which they would seldom *select* for their children. This was an attitude that would not endure, due to the advances being made under the national system. He welcomed the fact that teaching was gradually being viewed by parents 'with more favour, as an independent and respectable employment for their children', with the office of teacher '[advancing] in social estimation'.<sup>22</sup> Head inspector W.H. Newell had also noted the rise in respectability of

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<sup>19</sup>C.N.E.I., *Nineteenth report ... 1852*, App. H, p. 216.

<sup>20</sup>Teachers were ranked First to Third, with subdivisions within each class. Pupil teachers successfully completing their course were ranked 'First of Third'. However, classification at the lower rank of 'Second of Third' entitled one to recognition as a National Teacher.

<sup>21</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twentieth report ... 1853*, App. G, p. 123.

<sup>22</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fourth report ... 1857*, App. A, p. 66.

the teacher in the Trim area. Farmers, and others 'who would not, heretofore, permit their sons to become teachers, were willingly putting them forward for consideration as pupil teachers 'seeing how well they would be fed and cared for at the public charge'. A recent increase in teachers' salaries he also saw as contributing to this change of attitude.<sup>23</sup>

These upbeat views of the two head inspectors did not reflect the mood of the generality of national teachers. Judging by their comments, they believed that the very uniformity that the national system imposed was set to the lowest common denominator and resulted in a considerable disimprovement in the socio-economic status of the teacher. The experience of the more able among the teaching profession certainly compared unfavourably with that which had pertained in the pre-regulatory days. The standard demands, throughout this period, were for an increase in salary, direct payment, and a superannuation scheme. While the Board was broadly sympathetic, progress was made on only the first issue, and, judging by the sentiments expressed by a teacher correspondent in 1855, the proposed increase was grossly inadequate:

Sir, I am a National Teacher, situated in one of the poorest and most uncultivated localities in Ireland. I am married; alas! that is so, for my scanty salary falls short of supporting any family, even on the coarsest fare. I have no earthly resource but my salary, and the pupils attending my school don't pay. I dare not press them, for then I would have no attendance; and I have no private tuition or night school, for the people have no taste. What am I to do? I really don't know. My salary, comparatively speaking, is not bad, £22 per year; but a little calculation will prove its insufficiency to maintain myself and family in my isolated condition. I pay £2 a year for a very indifferent apartment; with the most rigid economy, 8s. per week barely uphold five in family, and this amounts to a sum greater than my salary. And how are they to be clothed? I must have a decent appearance myself - a teacher *must* be respectable looking; he must appear on Sundays at Divine Service a little smooth of course, as, next to the officiating clergyman, he is looked up to, at least by the younger folk; and to strangers there and elsewhere he is a subject of general remark. ... His everyday clothes must be good, as he must in his own person, set the example to his pupils. At the general examination he must uphold the dignity of his position, and a decent exterior will not a little aid his classification. In short, whether a teacher can or not, he 'must contrive' to appear respectable. His school must be repaired, washed, etc., always (in non-vested schools) by himself; and he will gain favour in the eyes of the inspector only as his school and premises, etc. are well kept. Not one circumstanced as I am can indulge (and see his family made happy around him) in the thought of being ever able to have a little delicacy of the most ordinary kind at table. Flesh meat is out of the question; and he must not think even seriously of a bowl of that exhilarating beverage, tea, after a hard week's toil ... And I am accounted a rich man in this place because I have so much as £22 a year!<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, App. B, p. 96.

<sup>24</sup>N.A.I., ED7/1: *Catholic Telegraph*, 5 Feb. 1855. On efforts of teachers to better their pay and conditions see also *Catholic Telegraph*, 30 June 1855, 10, 17 May, 18 Oct. 1856, 21 Mar., 21 Dec. 1857, 6, 13 Feb., 28 Aug., 19 Sept., 9, 23 Oct. 1858, 8, 15 Jan., 5, 26 Feb., 19 Mar. 1859, 12 May, 6 Oct. 1860; *The Tablet*, 17 Mar. 1855; *Daily Express*, 25 Jan., 7, 15 Feb. 1856, 17 Aug. 1860; *Evening Packet*, 10 Apr. 1856; *The Nation*, 28 Nov. 1857, 31 Mar. 17, 24 July, 7, 28 Aug., Sept. 2, 16 Oct., 13 Nov. 1858; *The Irishman*, 4 Sept. 1858, 24 Mar., 4 Aug. 1860.

In rural areas the abject poverty of the peasantry dictated that many able students were not in a position to remain long enough at school to meet the age requirement for entry to the junior staff of the model school. In the urban centres, where the same pressures were not so keenly felt, the multiplicity of more rewarding alternatives ensured that the problem of attracting suitable candidates was even more acute. Furthermore, of those who successfully completed the course of training, there was every likelihood that they would be attracted to even more remunerative employments outside of teaching. These difficulties of supply and retention had a greater bearing on male than on female candidates. Frequent allusion to them in the inspectorial reports on model schools in the principal urban areas of Belfast, Londonderry and Dublin is indicative of the concern they engendered.

Successive reports on Belfast District Model School, for a period of almost ten years, stressed its success as a training institute. There were, however, early worrying indications that pupils suitable for the office of pupil teacher were leaving before reaching the stipulated age. In an attempt to address this problem, it was proposed that a class of twelve paid male monitors be appointed from which the pupil teachers could later be selected, but a decision was deferred and matters were allowed drift.<sup>25</sup> However, serious concerns were again expressed in 1865 and 1866 over the calibre of candidate for the position of pupil teacher. A noticeable decline in applications attributable to mercantile and commercial employment opportunities in the city for young men 'of even moderate acquirements' obliged the inspector to look beyond Belfast for candidates to fill the vacancies. The standards of those available he described as 'meagre', although he was confident that they would make rapid progress during their course of training. In 1870 the inspector admitted that, due to the generally low proficiency of male candidates, it was necessary to overlook shortcomings and trust that their standards would rise over the period of the course.<sup>26</sup>

The converse applied with regard to the interest in the paid monitorships for female candidates. In general terms, Keenan stated that little difficulty was ever experienced in procuring suitable candidates for these positions 'for the simple reason that they are a stepping-stone to a competency, and to a respectable station in life'. All underwent examination before entry, and, unlike most of the males, the majority were students of the school. In Belfast, where upwards of 30,000 people were employed 'in the toilsome labours of the mills' - the greater number of them women - Keenan's observation that 'any occupation of a quiet kind befitting the nature of a woman and harmonising with their tastes, must, indeed, be rated as a desirable prize' reflected a general attitude.

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<sup>25</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 11 June 1858.

<sup>26</sup>*C.N.E.I.*, *Thirty-seventh report ... 1870*, App. B, p.104.

Teaching was one of few such employments open to women. Keenan prided himself in the fact that the national system provided employment for about 1,500 female teachers. He acknowledged the support of the managers and the public generally for this venture, contrasting it favourably with the situation in Prussia where the promoters of its schools 'have never ceased labouring to exclude females altogether from the education of children'.<sup>27</sup>

In Londonderry District Model School problems not dissimilar to those in Belfast were noted. Head Inspector J.G. Fleming reported in 1862 that he had received 'numerous applications' for positions from 'paid monitors, sons of teachers, and others'. However, it is apparent that the system did not operate wholly as intended. In 1867, the same inspector complained that members of the junior staff were leaving before the completion of the course, having already been offered teaching positions. More worryingly, Fleming admitted that, of those admitted as pupil teachers, some never intended on entering teaching and used the opportunity as a means of qualifying for some other position. He informed the commissioners that in cases where he had strong grounds for suspecting this to be the motive he 'got rid of ... [the pupil teacher] as soon as possible'.<sup>28</sup>

Not surprisingly the experience in Dublin differed little from that in Belfast and Londonderry. It was reported in 1858 by Newell that in Inchicore Model School, of the ten paid monitors in the boys' department, 'only three or four [were] effective'. The others, in his opinion, took the job 'for the sake of the small emolument, and for the extra instruction'. These had no intention of ever becoming teachers but were biding their time until they secured employment 'as shop boys or were apprenticed to trades'.<sup>29</sup> It was soon apparent that problems at the Inchicore school ran even deeper than this. Newell complained in 1857 that the directors of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company who were instrumental in having the school established '[took] no active interest in its welfare',<sup>30</sup> and later accused them of undermining the company's own efforts to provide education for the children of its workers by providing employment for them from as early as ten years of age. This, most parents were described as regarding 'as a great privilege'.<sup>31</sup> Clearly, many of those who comprised the junior staff had failed at an earlier stage to gain employment with the Railway Company.

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>28</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-ninth report ... 1862*, App. B, p. 104; C.N.E.I., *Thirty-fourth report ... 1867*, App. B, pp 97-8.

<sup>29</sup>*Twenty-fifth report of the commissioners of national education for the year 1858*, [2593], H.C. 1860, xxv (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fifth report ... 1858*), App. B, p. 28.

<sup>30</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fourth report ... 1857*, App. A, p.12

<sup>31</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-seventh report ... 1860*, App. C, p. 69.

The situation at West Dublin Model School, at the same period, was only marginally less worrying. Unlike the Inchicore school, the local major commercial concern, Guinness, was seen neither as a patron of the school nor was it named as a competitor for the services of potential paid monitors and pupil teachers. However, the rival attraction of other employment did act as a disincentive to young men in the area to consider teaching as a possible long-term occupation. The junior staff consisted of ten males and fourteen females. Of the former, Newell had 'little ... favourable to record'. He believed that no more than three or four were effective as teachers, while the others 'accepted their situations as a temporary occupation for sake of the small emolument, and for the increase of opportunities afforded of gaining instruction, but not with a view of becoming teachers'. In Newell's opinion, those of the senior class from which the junior staff should be drawn '[preferred] employment as shop-boys, or they become apprentices to trades'. On the other hand, the monitresses, as in Belfast, all intended on becoming teachers, and were described as 'very earnest in their vocation'.<sup>32</sup> The annual *Report on the Dublin West school for 1861* indicated that matters had improved significantly. While it was accepted that as a training school it was 'very inferior' to the district model schools, it was regarded as 'still very useful', with many of the boys and girls from the school's top classes motivated by a desire to become members of its junior staff. When trained, it was claimed that 'they generally [took] their place permanently in the service of the commissioners'.<sup>33</sup> However, this situation did not endure. By the end of the decade, a palpable sense of unease is observable in the reports, with the lure of more gainful employment proving irresistible; as head inspector M. Fitzgerald noted in 1874:

There is no domestic establishment, which renders it very difficult to provide pupil teachers, as they must be obtained from the school itself. We have great difficulty in keeping up a supply even of monitors in the boys' school; as the many openings for well educated lads in the city draw them from us after a year or two. Comparatively few complete their ordinary term of service, and it is very rarely that one of them becomes a pupil teacher.<sup>34</sup>

On the face of it, the situation in the girls' and infants' departments appeared to be more satisfactory, with a full junior staff comprising both pupil teachers and paid monitors. However, it had been the practice with regard to the female pupil teachers to allow them to retain their positions 'considerably beyond the prescribed term of service'. While useful from the point of view of providing continuity of experience, it was seen as 'injurious to the girls themselves'. It provided no stimulus for those holding these positions to seek employment elsewhere, and, more fundamentally, it undermined the

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<sup>32</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fifth report ... 1858*, App. B, p. 28.

<sup>33</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-eight report ... 1861*, App. C, p. 81.

<sup>34</sup>C.N.E.I., *Forty-first report ... 1874*, Appendix, p.105.

very training system in that senior girls within the school, seeing no prospect of appointment to the junior staff, left as soon as they were old enough to take up employment elsewhere. There was no ready solution to the problem as those that were retained, it would appear, were all Roman Catholics who would experience considerable difficulty in gaining employment in national schools in the city. It was decided that those involved would be removed at intervals during the course of the coming year. This was the approach adopted, and the commissioners were informed that all five 'succeeded in obtaining employment as teachers'. The vacancies were filled from the staff of monitresses, who in turn had been recruited from among the pupils.<sup>35</sup>

The process of selecting male pupil teachers in the Board's Central Model School in Marlborough Street was unique and is deserving of particular consideration. The female pupil teachers and monitresses were appointed in the normal way, and, as in the district model schools, their positions were regarded as secure for the duration of the course as long as they gave satisfaction. Most, it is reported, went on to become teachers. The male pupil teachers, on the other hand, did not have security of office. They were paid monitors chosen from the top class. Examined monthly, those scoring in the top half were classed as pupil teachers, with those in the lower half denominated monitors. This was an invidious arrangement and the Reverend McGauley, in the only official report on the operation of the Central Training and Model Schools, freely admitted in 1855 that it worked to the detriment of the institution's role as a preliminary training agent for male teachers. The uncertainty surrounding the position and the lack of financial inducement resulted in potentially suitable candidates leaving the school before they attained the preferred age for appointment. Their places were taken by younger students, 'in some cases, scarcely as old as those they teach', who possessed neither the experience nor the required authority. It would appear that this approach was adopted as it was the opinion of the teachers in the male school that if the appointments of pupil teachers were permanent they would become 'inattentive and negligent'.<sup>36</sup> The contrasting outcomes of this questionable arrangement are evident in the accounts provided regarding the destination of pupils leaving in 1855. No boys were enrolled in Sixth Class and only thirty-two completed Fifth Class. The comparable figure for the girls was 115 in Fifth Class, with a further seventeen completing the Sixth Class programme.<sup>37</sup> Of the destination of thirty-seven males recorded, the most popular position gained was that of clerk (14), followed by shopkeeper (6). McGauley acknowledged, as did Keenan in Belfast, that openings for females were fewer, with employment 'in afterlife being, as a

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<sup>35</sup> *Thirty-sixth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1869*, [C 119], H.C. xxiii (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Thirty-sixth report ... 1869*), App. B, p. 105; C.N.E.I., *Thirty-seventh report ... 1870*, App. B, p. 142.

<sup>36</sup> C.N.E.I., *Twenty-second report ... 1855*, App. G, pp 162-3.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 164-5.



rule, the management of her own domestic affairs, and the care of her home'. Of the 257 whose destinations were known, employment in various crafts relating to clothing predominated, with the most popular being dressmakers(54) and milliners(34). Shopkeepers(24) were also well represented. Topping the list, though, were teachers(114). Thus, while none of the males entered teaching, forty-four per cent of the females did. On the basis of these figures, McGauley concluded that

young persons certainly will not care to embrace the office of teacher in the schools, if they are not sure of it for a reasonable time: not will they think of it as a profession, if the emoluments are found to be only uncertain and occasional.<sup>38</sup>

Difficulty in finding suitable male pupil teachers from within the student body of the Central Model School forced the commissioners to throw open the positions to senior paid monitors in national schools in the Dublin District from 1861 onwards, rather than fill vacancies from within the student body, as had been the customary practice.<sup>39</sup>

The allure of better paying positions in the commercial and retail sectors was not confined to the urban areas of Dublin, Belfast and Londonderry. Lurgan, too, reported difficulty in the mid-1860s in securing the services of suitable monitors, since the most likely candidates were drawn away, it was claimed, by the 'facilities for obtaining remunerative employment ... in manufacturing'. Consequently, those who qualified for the position 'set but little value on it'. Moreover, the solution which pertained to Belfast - appointing suitable candidates from rural areas of the province - was not found to be applicable here. Lurgan, being but a minor model school, lacked residential quarters, and the allowance of the paid monitor would not cover the cost of board and lodging. As a result, one of the four monitorships allowed for the male department, was 'nearly always' vacant. As with other similarly circumstanced institutes, the procurement of suitable female candidates did not pose a problem.<sup>40</sup>

### ***7.3 Religious difficulties encountered***

At the time of establishment of individual model schools, the religious ratio of the staff was agreed. Generally the department headships were distributed among the three principal denominations. This practice proved irksome for minority dissenting groups such as the 'Non-Subscribing Presbyterians of Ireland' who complained on this account in 1862 'that no person of any other denomination has any chance of being promoted to those offices'. The reply, to the effect that appointments were made on the basis of merit, was disingenuous.<sup>41</sup> In practice, Roman Catholics were under-represented in

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 166.

<sup>39</sup>M.C.N.E.I., 10 May 1861.

<sup>40</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-second report ... 1865*, App. B, p. 96.

<sup>41</sup>M.C.N.E.I., 31 Oct. 1862.



headships of infant departments and over-represented in the other two. This discriminated against Protestant teachers, particularly those of the Established Church. As early as 1855, it was pointed out to the commissioners by Prof. Robert Sullivan of the Training Department that none of the resident masters in any of the district model schools was of the Established Church. On this occasion the observation was merely noted.<sup>42</sup> Later, the resident commissioner, Alexander Macdonnell, admitted to the Powis Inquiry that head masters and head mistresses in the boys' and girls' departments of the various model schools were predominantly Roman Catholic. He lamely suggested that this was because, outside of Ulster, the majority of the population were of that faith, this despite the fact that just under half of the model schools were located in the northern province.<sup>43</sup> In truth, it must be seen as a crude and ineffective attempt to appease Roman Catholic clerical opposition. Indeed, the favouring of Roman Catholics for the head-ships in the boys' and girls' departments encouraged only complaints, specifically from J.W. Kavanagh, about their under-representation in the infant departments.<sup>44</sup>

The positions of assistants and various junior staff, unlike those of the head-ships, more accurately reflected local circumstances. They were influenced by the demography of the catchment area, and/or the level of support reported among the different persuasions. When these proportions were fixed, the commissioners were loath to depart from the arrangements, and, as the Board's interest in maintaining the pre-determined ratios in Clonmel and Newry indicate, it demanded that individual inspectors comply with its wishes in this respect.<sup>45</sup> The concerted antagonism exhibited by the Roman Catholic hierarchy and clergy towards the model schools from the 1860s onwards and the spiritual sanctions invoked resulted in a dramatic drop in attendance by Catholic school children to the schools that were targeted. The ban introduced in 1863 had neither as significant nor immediate an impact on the numbers of Roman Catholics coming forward for selection as junior staff. Consequently, difficulty in filling the allotted vacancies was rarely due to clerical influence.

In the appointment of Protestants outside of Ulster and the larger urban areas, the Board's options were frequently quite limited. This was due in part to a principled objection to the national system by certain elements within the Established Church, and, even where schools were well supported, it was common that they did not include sufficiently strong representation from among the social groups that produced a majority of teachers. In order to maintain the denominational balance on the junior staff in certain

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<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 18 Jan. 1856.

<sup>43</sup>*Powis*, iv, 1075.

<sup>44</sup>Kavanagh, *Catholic case stated*, p.190.

<sup>45</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, Clonmel - 13 Feb. 1852, 19 Aug. 1853; Newry - 13 Feb. 1852.

schools, it was found necessary to seek candidates from outside the local inspectorial district. From the outset, the district inspector for the Athy school was forced to adopt this approach, as no suitable candidate came forward from within the locality.<sup>46</sup> Similar difficulties arose in Dunmanway due to clerical opposition. J.W. Kavanagh claimed that this antipathy was responsible for the resignation from the junior staff of ‘two or three ... Protestants’, and that the Board was forced to appoint a Protestant pupil teacher from Antrim who would not be susceptible to local influences.<sup>47</sup> While Board *Minutes* do acknowledge the difficulties encountered, they indicate also that the vacancy was filled by a candidate teacher from Kilfinane in Co. Limerick.<sup>48</sup> Clerical influence could also be brought to bear in urban areas, though not as overtly. In West Dublin, in 1864, the difficulty experienced in selecting a suitably qualified Protestant pupil teacher was related to a reluctance on the part of those with the necessary acquirements to accept it. It is not possible to be certain of the reason for this, but Head Inspector Timothy Sheahan’s observation suggests that ‘the silent and quiet’ opposition of the clergy of the Established Church was ‘not less effective’ than the overt resistance of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>49</sup>

Among the locations selected, Enniscorthy, while a predominantly Roman Catholic town, was unusual in that the clergy of both principal denominations sought to deter children of their respective faiths from attending the district model school.<sup>50</sup> They were very successful. In a school which could have been expected to hold between 250 and 300 pupils, average annual attendance over the period 1863 to 1874 ranged from 52 to 84, with the average on rolls not exceeding 111 in any year.<sup>51</sup> This had serious implications for its role as a training institute. Initially it had been envisaged that, in line with the usual practice for a school of its expected size, eight pupil teachers would be appointed, but the full complement was never achieved. As early as 1862, Head Inspector W.A. Hunter felt that, due to the small attendance of pupils, he could not recommend a staff of more than three pupil teachers. However, neither the small attendance nor the deficit on the junior staff he believed would take from the school’s efficiency as a training establishment. Bolstered by this belief, and undeterred by unrelenting opposition, he successfully sought the sanction of an extra three junior staff in 1863. Of the six then in training - four pupil teachers and two monitresses - one belonged to the Established Church, one was a Wesleyan, and the remaining four were

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<sup>46</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 17 Sept., 1 Oct. 1852, 5 Oct. 1855.

<sup>47</sup> *Lords’ Inquiry ... 1854*, p. 361.

<sup>48</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 27 Feb. 1849 and 7 Feb. 1850.

<sup>49</sup> *C.N.E.I.*, *Thirty-first report ... 1864*, App. B, p. 95.

<sup>50</sup> Of Enniscorthy’s population of 5396 in 1861, 86.9% were Roman Catholic, 11.4% were of the Established Church, and ‘Others’ accounted for 1.6% (*Powis*, vii, 86).

<sup>51</sup> Figures taken from the relevant Annual Reports.

Roman Catholics.<sup>52</sup> However, subsequent reports, though sketchy, suggest that the school as a training centre went into an immediate and steady decline. There was no reference to selection by examination - a sure indication of little interest. In 1867 the junior staff numbered four, of whom two were Roman Catholics. While the inspector's report was not specific as to their status, the Board's 'Returns' to the Powis Inquiry reveal that none of this quartet was a pupil teacher. By 1874 there were just two paid female monitors in training which was 'as much as numbers will allow'.<sup>53</sup> The tenor of Head Inspector James Patterson's report implied that the head of the male department, Daniel Kelly, was in part responsible for this decline. He was described as 'amiable and conscientious' but 'not an able teacher'. Patterson was of the opinion that, being a Roman Catholic and a resident of Enniscorthy, he was appointed in the expectation of winning the confidence of his co-religionists. In this he failed, as, apart from his own son, only two others of that denomination attended. Patterson concluded by giving his opinion

that the male school is hurrying to extinction, and is dragging with it the female and infant departments; and that if this result may be averted, it can be done only by replacing Mr. Kelly by an active, very intelligent, systematic teacher, possessed of agreeable manner, to whom, if a Roman Catholic, a Protestant assistant should be given, even though the number of pupils is so small.<sup>54</sup>

It is extremely doubtful if such a course of action could have arrested the decline. From the outset the combined, though not concerted, effect of the respective clerical interests threatened the school's very existence and undermined its viability as a training institute. The pupil teacher training programme - abandoned as early as 1867 - was the first casualty of this opposition. By the early 1870s, that for paid monitors appeared destined for a similar fate. It is worth noting though that, even in the Enniscorthy school where the attendance of Roman Catholic pupils was minuscule, there is no suggestion that efforts to maintain a presence of candidates of that denomination on the junior staff were unsuccessful.

In Ulster, adequate representation of Protestants on the various junior staffs did not pose a problem. Still, care had to be exercised. Unlike other parts of the country, attention had to be paid to the claims of the different Protestant sects for recognition and representation. Here, too, it was at times found necessary to appoint from outside the area in order to maintain the required balance. Problems arose not from a want of

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<sup>52</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-ninth report ... 1862*, App. B, p. 81; C.N.E.I., *Thirtieth report ... 1863*, App. B, p. 97.

<sup>53</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-fourth report ... 1867*, App. B, p. 132; *Fortieth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1873*, [C 965], H.C. 1874, xix (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Fortieth report ... 1873*), App. B, p. 135; *Forty-first report ... 1874*, Appendix p. 63; *Powis*, vii, 93.

<sup>54</sup>C.N.E.I., *Forty-first report ... 1874*, Appendix, p. 65.

numbers but from a scarcity of suitable candidates. For example, in Ballymena, when suitable candidates of the Established Church were not readily available from schools within the inspectorial district, the appointment of two Presbyterians was sanctioned but on the strict understanding that should a similar case arise in the future, the district inspector should 'endeavour to find a member of the Established Church from a national school in a neighbouring inspectorial district.'<sup>55</sup> In Bailieborough, too, even though the model school was supported by all religious persuasions, Head Inspector Sheahan complained that it was not always possible to find suitable candidates, either of the Established Church or Presbyterian faiths, to take up the post of pupil teacher. Those to whom he was forced to have recourse could not be relied upon to continue in the Board's service on the completion of their course. His alternative suggestion, that those appointed should be required to produce a certificate signed by their parents and two other 'respectable' persons promising that they would commit themselves to the Board, did not find favour, though the proposal did resurface from time to time.<sup>56</sup>

The adjustments in the composition of the junior staff in Belfast District Model School at the time of its opening, following representations to the Board by Presbyterian interests, assuaged their concerns. However, complaints about the religious composition of the senior staff were regularly made by Presbyterians over the next number of years. The tendency to appoint Roman Catholics as heads in the male and female departments was regarded as a grievance, as the salary for the head of an infant department was inferior to that of the other two. Increased enrolment in 1860, which necessitated an increase in staff, presented the Board with the opportunity of redressing any imbalance. It reminded its inspectors that the relative proportions attending the school should be kept in mind when making appointments. Attention also focused on the perceived political leanings of Roman Catholic members of staff. At a meeting of the Belfast Presbytery, named clergymen alleged that the loyalty of some teachers was 'suspect', and accused them of manifesting 'Young Ireland principles'. A request by one of the Presbyterian clergymen to be provided with information as to the religious persuasions of individual staff members was declined by the Board.<sup>57</sup> The matter was subsequently overtaken by other events involving serious accusations regarding the supervision of pupil teachers and evidence of sectarianism. The Board's investigation of these incidents, which came to be known as the 'Mock Confession', and the reaction of the various parties will be dealt with below.<sup>58</sup> Statistics provided for 1865 would suggest that the proportionate denominational composition of the permanent staff closely

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<sup>55</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 19 Nov. 1852.

<sup>56</sup>*Twenty-sixth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1859*, [2706], H.C. 1860, xxvi (henceforth *C.N.E.I., Twenty-sixth report ... 1859*), App. B, p. 68.

<sup>57</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 12 Feb., 26 Mar. 1858, 12 Nov. 1859, 27 July, 3 Aug., 5 Oct., 9 Nov. 1860.

<sup>58</sup>See Chapter VIII, pp 204-5.

reflected the enrolment. Of the 1,277 pupils on the rolls at that date, 21 per cent were of the Established Church, 23 per cent of the Roman Catholic, while various shades of Presbyterians made up the balance of 56 per cent. The relevant respective figures for the permanent staff were 20 per cent, 24 per cent, and 56 per cent. However, the remark by Head Inspector James Patten that 'an effort is also made to maintain due proportions in the junior teaching staff' would infer that the achievement of fair religious representation on a junior staff, that usually numbered around fifty, was more problematic.<sup>59</sup>

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

The selection process for members of junior staff - whether as pupil teachers or paid monitors - was, officially at least, based on three criteria - moral uprightness, an aptitude for and a commitment to the job, and the achievement of a certain academic standard. Candidates were to be drawn, in the main, from the paid monitors and other 'distinguished' pupils of the ordinary national schools. As teachers they were expected to live 'in friendly habits with the people; not greatly elevated above them'.<sup>60</sup> There is nothing in the available data to suggest that the Board's officers consciously overlooked any known moral defect in a candidate in making a selection. In respect of the remaining criteria it is apparent that a degree of flexibility was permitted, particularly concerning the selection of males. Compared to females, the later age at which males became eligible, allied to the greater attraction of better paying positions in industry, or the necessity of engaging in child labour in poorer rural areas, deprived many of the district model schools of 'suitable' candidates, judged both by rank and ability. In many instances examination in the prescribed programme for entry served to show only how deficient the candidates were. Competence in the programme thus became an aspiration rather than a minimum entry requirement. Where those of the 'humbler' classes failed to express an interest in selection, positions on the junior staff tended to go to those who did not regard teaching as a worthwhile occupation. Measures taken to address this problem were more successful in rural rather than urban areas, but in both had a negative impact on supply.

Efforts to ensure an equitable representation of the various denominations on the junior staff, in line with the local demographic breakdown, also had a significant bearing on the selection process. Difficulties encountered in localities where the population was predominantly Roman Catholic were compounded by the quiet hostility of some of the Protestant clergy as well as by the tendency of religious minorities to be from a higher social class than that which provided most suitable candidates. On occasion, disquiet

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<sup>59</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-second report ... 1865*, App. B, p. 82.

<sup>60</sup>C.N.E.I., *Second report ... 1835*, p. 5.

concerning representation was voiced by members of minority sects. In Ulster the problem was in addressing the needs of Dissenting Presbyterians. In other parts of the country difficulties were experienced with Wesleyans. Even where there was a willingness to accede to the request, the absence of interest by prospective candidates denied the Board the opportunity of complying with the wishes of the spiritual leaders.<sup>61</sup> Still, the statistics compiled by the Powis Commission on the number and religious denomination of resident pupil teachers would suggest that the Board was successful in securing mixed religious representation on junior staffs. In only two district model schools - Athy and Dunmanway - were the junior staffs entirely Roman Catholic. In one other - Newry - the Established Church was not represented. In a further three - Cork, Trim and Waterford - there were no Presbyterian pupil teachers. In three district model schools only - Enniskillen, Londonderry and Newtownards - were there pupil teachers registered as Dissenting Presbyterians. In eleven of the eighteen the three denominations were represented on the junior staffs (*Table II*).

*Table II*

<b>Number and Religious Denomination of the resident Pupil Teachers in 1867</b>					
	<i>E.C.</i>	<i>R.C.</i>	<i>Pres</i>	<i>Diss</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Athy</b>	0	2	0	0	2
<b>Bailieboro</b>	1	3	1	0	5
<b>Ballymena</b>	1	1	4	0	6
<b>Belfast</b>	3	3	7	0	13
<b>Clonmel</b>	1	3	1	0	5
<b>Coleraine</b>	1	2	3	0	6
<b>Cork</b>	3	5	0	0	8
<b>Dunmanway</b>	0	4	0	0	4
<b>Enniscorthy</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Enniskillen</b>	2	2	1	1	6
<b>Galway</b>	1	3	1	0	5
<b>Kilkenny</b>	2	3	0	0	5
<b>Limerick</b>	2	4	1	0	7
<b>Londonderry</b>	3	2	3	1	9
<b>Newry</b>	0	1	1	0	2
<b>Newtownards</b>	1	1	6	1	9
<b>Sligo</b>	1	2	2	0	5
<b>Trim</b>	1	4	0	0	5
<b>Waterford</b>	3	3	0	0	6
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>108</b>

(Source: *Powis*, vii, 93)

Of the 108 resident pupil teachers in 1867, 48 or 44.4 per cent were Roman Catholics. They were represented on the junior staffs of all eighteen district model schools, and

<sup>61</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-second report ... 1865*, App. B, p. 74.

they formed a majority in half of this number. Considering the venomous campaign conducted by the Roman Catholic hierarchy and clergy against the model schools, culminating in the interdict on them as training institutes from 1863 onwards, this is a remarkable figure. Average daily attendance at model schools, both district and minor, for the last quarter of 1867, indicates that the efforts to discourage Roman Catholics pupils was more successful. They formed just 27 per cent of the total. This figure understates the success of the church campaign. When the five schools in which Roman Catholics formed 82 per cent of the average attendance, and which were unofficially tolerated as a matter of 'local prudence', are removed, the relevant figure is 13 per cent.<sup>62</sup> No figures are given for non-residential junior staff. Considering that they lived in the localities in which the schools were situated it is probable that, where sustained opposition was mounted, the effect was more pronounced. When one considers that for the majority of Roman Catholics wishing to practise as teachers entry was almost invariably at the discretion of a clerical manager, one would expect that a prohibition would be even more effective on junior staff than on ordinary pupils. The only reasonable explanation for this apparent paradox is that the majority of those Roman Catholics who presented themselves for selection as junior staff in model schools did so with the intention of preparing themselves for some occupation other than teaching.

In sum, due to factors both economic and religious, those selected for training in model schools were drawn from a wide band of the social spectrum, of whom many, initially at least, did not meet the required academic standard. Many, of those who did, underwent the course, not with the intention, in some cases, nor the prospect, in others, of becoming teachers. Rather, it was viewed as a means of preparation for more rewarding occupations both from the point of view of remuneration and status.

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<sup>62</sup> Powis, vii, 94.

## **Routine and Discipline - Internal and External Supervision**

In contrast to the flexible approach which circumstances forced upon the inspectorate (particularly with regard to academic attainments) in its efforts to maintain the full complement of junior staff in the model schools, that relating to routine and discipline within each establishment was rigid. Strict regimentation was consistent with the adage of the Victorian social reformer - 'A place for everything, and everything in its place'. Aimed at perpetuating the values of the dominant class and inculcating order and the need for discipline, it was the most notable feature of the detailed daily routines to which all were expected to conform. No one was free from regulation, whether a member of the junior staff, teacher or inspector. In a strictly hierarchical and centralised system no one was beyond reproach from immediate superiors, with the ultimate responsibility of ensuring obedience and imposing sanction resting with the Board. Whereas the disciplining of the junior staff was most likely to arise from direct acts of infraction, their superiors - the teachers and, especially, district inspectors - ran the additional risk of censure in the event of either a failure to detect infringements, or tardiness in dealing with them. In a system which encouraged mixed denominational support, any instance of moral laxity was subject to special deprecation, while a premium was attached to evidence of religious harmony.

### ***8.1 Internal Discipline***

The attempt to regulate the running of each model school in an almost mechanistic manner is nowhere more evident than in the detailed organisation of the domestic life of residential junior staff. The routine of the day began at 5.30 a.m. in summer, and a half-hour later in winter, and finished with 'lights out', which occurred at 9.30 and 10.00 p.m. respectively. In all district model schools there were periods of instruction for the pupil teachers, given by both the headmaster and assistant, morning and evening. Apart from the time spent occupied in teaching in the schools - from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. - pupil teachers were expected to undertake a variety of religious, domestic, tutorial, and supervisory duties. In district model schools that had farms attached, instruction, both theoretical and practical was also provided in agriculture. The 'Occupation of Time', or timetable, prescribed for Bailieborough in 1849 was typical of that for rural district model schools.



	5.30	Rise
5.30	6.00	Make up beds
6.00	6.30	Wash and Dress - Morning Prayer
6.30	7.00	Instruction from Head Master
7.00	8.00	Instruction in Agriculture
8.00	8.15	Pump water, etc.
8.15	8.45	Breakfast
8.45	9.00	Proceed to Model Schools, open playground etc.
9.00	9.50	In charge of play grounds, or instructing monitors
9.50	10.00	Inspection in cleanliness - march pupils into school
10.00	3.00	In charge of divisions in school
3.00	3.15	Brush school rooms, make pens, lock schools
3.15	3.30	Return to farmhouse - prepare for dinner
3.30	4.15	Dinner
4.15	5.30	Recreation - if wet, voluntary study
5.30	8.00	Study or instruction under headmaster
8.00	8.15	Books, etc., locked up
8.15	8.45	Supper
8.45	9.00	Shoes and Clothes brushed - gates locked
9.00	9.20	Night Prayer, at 9.20 to bed
	9.30	Extinguish lights in dormitory <sup>1</sup>

Keenan's account of the pupil teacher timetable at Belfast District Model School, though designed for students of a large urban school, indicates that the regime in such schools was broadly similar, albeit with less emphasis on onerous domestic 'duties':

The pupil teachers rise at half past five o'clock in the morning, and they are allowed three-quarters of an hour for dressing, making their beds, and performing their morning devotions. ... From a quarter past six to a quarter past seven o'clock they are preparing notes of the lessons which their duties will lead them to teach during the day ... The headmaster then gives a lecture which lasts each morning for three-quarters of an hour; his instructions embracing the subjects of the pupil teachers' course generally, but especially those parts of it which they are called upon to teach in the schools. The lecture is over at eight o'clock. The next twenty minutes are devoted to study. Breakfast is then partaken of; and at a quarter to nine they walk to the Model School. They then receive a lesson in drawing which lasts until half-past nine o'clock, at which hour the regular business of the school commences. They are for the most part teaching during school hours. ... At half-past three o'clock they dine - the master presiding. Dinner is over at four o'clock. An hour is then given for relaxation; and at five o'clock they take a walk of about three English miles into the country, one of the assistant masters invariably accompanying them; but if it be the winter season, or if the weather be bad, they engage in marching and gymnastic exercises, under the drill-master at the Model Schools. From six o'clock to half-past seven o'clock, lectures are given by two of the assistant masters, each lecture occupying three-quarters of an hour ... From half-past seven to nine o'clock is spent in study ... Supper is at nine o'clock. At a quarter-past nine o'clock the lads clean their own shoes; and at half-past nine o'clock they proceed to their dormitories. At ten o'clock the lights are extinguished.<sup>2</sup>

Instances of breaches of these regulations were rare; the most common infractions related to non-attendance and absence without sufficient reason.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, Appendix, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fourth report ... 1857*, App. A, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup>N.A.I., ED2 and ED3 'Registers': Athy - ED3/2-23: 25 Aug. 1854; ED3/4-124: 11 Oct. 1867; Kilkenny - ED2/177-81: 11 Sept. 1874, 20 Mar. 1875; Limerick - ED3/3-51: 21 Sept. 1860; ED2/189-164: 22 May 1873; Omagh - ED2/72-20: 16 May 1871, 20 June 1873; Waterford - ED3/4-192: 17 Apr. 1874;

Dietary arrangements for the resident pupil teachers not only reflected the strict regimentation associated with other aspects of model school management, but were intended to reinforce the overt expectations of the Board and its officers with respect to the social status they envisaged their candidate teachers enjoying in the future. Initially, £16 *per capita* allowance was paid to the headmaster annually for maintenance. Strict supervision of the diet provided ensured that there was no repeat of the allegations of abuse made against masters of the Charter schools, though, the renting of land by headmasters from the Board, allowing them to supplement their income by supplying provisions from their own resources, did cause its own problems and obliged the Board to order in January 1856

that teachers of District Model Schools shall not be permitted to hold land nor to keep livestock of any description either on school premises or elsewhere, for their own private emolument; and that they be directed to confine themselves strictly to the duties connected with their position as Resident Masters.<sup>4</sup>

Where comment is passed on the diet its plain nature is stressed. In Newry, in 1849, the pupil teachers had for breakfast 'tea once a week, and stirabout with milk the other mornings'; dinner consisted of meat, rice or fish, together with potatoes or bread, while bread or stirabout with milk or buttermilk was provided for supper. This was described as 'simple, but wholesome and sufficient', and, saliently, 'but little better than what the generality of elementary teachers may command under the present circumstances'. The estimated cost of maintaining each pupil teacher was 6s. per week or £15 12s. annually. This allowance, which included generous quantities of meat, fish and potatoes, the inspector regarded as 'perhaps, rather large', believing that with better management it might be reduced 'without in any material degree affecting the comforts and sufficiency of the table'. The cost, too, he believed to be somewhat high.<sup>5</sup>

This was true compared with expenditure at Trim. The 1851 report for that school emphasised the commitment to avoid fostering notions of grandeur. While some concerns were voiced concerning the dietary table, considering 'the arduous duties of pupil teachers', William H. Newell, then a district inspector, held it to be of paramount importance that

while the dietary is sufficient, it should be simple - that it should be of such description as they [the pupil teachers] may afterwards be able to afford themselves - not too far

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Coleraine - ED3/2-78: 6 Jan. 1858.

<sup>4</sup>M.C.N.E.I., 15 Sept. 1854, 25 May, 16, 30 Nov. 1855, 11 Jan. 1856.

N.A.I., ED3/2-69 (Coleraine): 1 Dec. 1855.

<sup>5</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, Appendix, p. 197. According to the headmaster's returns the quantities consumed by each pupil teacher weekly were as follows: meat, 3lbs; rice 1lb; fish 2lbs; bread 5lbs; sugar, 1/2lb; meal, 9lbs; potatoes, 2 stone; new-milk, 3 quarts; buttermilk, 3 1/2 quarts; 'to which are to be added a little tea, butter, spice, salt, etc.'.

removed from what they have been used to, or too nearly approaching what might give them ideas of luxury.

The plainness of the diet on offer, in this instance, cannot have encouraged any fanciful expectations. By quantity, one pound of bread and one pint of milk, with cocoa on alternate days, was the breakfast fare. Supper, nightly, consisted of three-quarters of a pound of oatmeal and one pint of milk. Three-quarters of a pound of meat with vegetable was served for dinner twice weekly. On other days, soup, rice or eggs were the main constituents, accompanied on all days by either one pound of bread or a similar weight of potatoes. Newell described it as ‘amply sufficient’ and reported that he had never received a complaint either as to quantity or to quality.<sup>6</sup>

The fare at some other schools was more varied. In Ballymena District Model School, ‘flesh’ meat was served on two days of the week, fish on two others, and rice and milk, soup or meat, and Irish stew on the remainder.<sup>7</sup> In Waterford District Model School, meat was served on four days of the week. The meat on one of these days was bacon.<sup>8</sup> This was the only reference to its being provided in any of the model schools.

Dining was also perceived as an opportunity to inculcate appropriate behaviour, as Inspector Keenan observed with satisfaction in respect of the ‘plain and substantial’ fare on offer at Belfast District Model School in 1857:

I have frequently visited the establishment during meal hours, and I have always, with much pleasure observed that advantage is taken of the opportunity to cultivate good manners, gentle habits, and a strict observance of the little amenities of the table, which are as becoming in the humblest as in the most exalted stations in society.<sup>9</sup>

The supervision of residential establishments was a duty performed by district inspectors both with assiduousness and regularity as attested to by the observation of J.W. Kavanagh concerning Clonmel District Model School. Kavanagh stated that he and his junior colleague carefully watched over the diet, to see that it was ample in quantity and of the prescribed quality; noted ‘the sanitary condition of the dormitories’, and kept a check on the ‘habits and demeanour’ of the pupil teachers. It was their practice to arrive unannounced at various, but specific times on any day ‘to ascertain that all the arrangements - sanitary, literary, moral, and religious, were fully carried into effect’.<sup>10</sup>

Inspection, however thorough it may have been, was not entirely effective in maintaining standards. Complaints about the state of the residential establishments and

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<sup>6</sup>C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, App. B, p. 94.

<sup>7</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, Appendix, p. 255.

<sup>8</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-third report ... 1856*, App. B, p. 127.

<sup>9</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fourth report ... 1857*, App. A, p. 66.

<sup>10</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, Appendix, p. 272.

the attention paid to the material well-being of the pupil teachers arose from time to time, albeit in a small number of schools. These were usually uncovered during the course of routine inspections, or were brought to the notice of the Board by aggrieved members of the junior staff. There were few instances of serious conflict between pupil teachers and headmasters, but of those that did occur, the incidents at Newry and Coleraine were the most notable.

In the course of a favourable report for 1857 on Newry District Model School, Head Inspector Patten observed that there had not been 'the slightest complaint of disagreement or want of cordial and complete harmony amongst the teachers themselves and resident inmates with each other.'<sup>11</sup> In this he was clearly less than candid since he noted a year later that the commissioners had to dispense with the services of the ... headmaster', Alexander McDonald. This was due to his failure to provide properly for the material welfare of the pupil teachers in his care.<sup>12</sup> This heralded an unsettled period for the school. Unfortunately for McDonald, the investigation, prompted by the complaint over the food supplied, uncovered other more serious shortcomings in the operation of the school, particularly in respect of the instruction given to the pupil teachers and the keeping of school accounts. Moreover, McDonald's fondness for alcohol and his failure to discharge school debts also came to light, as a result of which the Board ordered his dismissal.<sup>13</sup> His replacement, Samuel Wallace, formerly headmaster at Bailieborough, likewise had a fractious relationship with the junior staff, and was, in turn, replaced by John Brown, also of Bailieborough.<sup>14</sup> With this appointment, harmony was finally restored, and the inspector felt able to report in 1861 that the school was again 'in a satisfactory state as regards order and discipline' with the junior staff 'diligent in their studies and attentive to the business assigned to them'.<sup>15</sup>

Intermittent problems with the operation of Coleraine District Model School, over a period of more than a decade, were brought to the attention of the Board both by the inspectorate and by disgruntled pupil teachers. After an early period when reports on the establishment were positive both with regard to instruction and training, profound dissatisfaction with the state of the male department necessitated a 'special report' to the commissioners in 1855. The allegations made against Johnston, the headmaster, were similar to those forthcoming in Newry and centred on indiscipline, lack of attention to the regular examination of the pupil teachers, and misappropriation of funds. Unlike Newry, the headmaster's position was found, on investigation, to be remediable, with

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<sup>11</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fourth report ... 1857*, App. A., p. 15.

<sup>12</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fifth report ... 1858*, App. B, p. 43.

<sup>13</sup>C.N.E.I., *M.C.N.E.I.*, 19 Mar., 20 Aug., 10 Sept., 10 Dec. 1858, 7 Jan. 1859.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 9 Apr. 1860.

<sup>15</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-eighth report ... 1861*, App. C, p. 86.

Johnston directed to outline the steps required 'for rendering [the school] efficient for the future'.<sup>16</sup> His efforts met with success, and a year later Head Inspector Keenan was happy to report a 'considerable improvement' in all departments, and that the re-organisation of the pupil teachers' class was 'affording great satisfaction'.<sup>17</sup> However, a reminder from the Board to Johnston in 1857 that his retention was conditional on his '[applying] himself seriously and assiduously to the several points in ... Keenan's letter' suggests that the improvement was not as complete as was officially claimed.<sup>18</sup> This may reflect the fact that Johnston's problems did not all emanate from the manner in which he ran the school. An 'improper intimacy' between his daughter and a pupil teacher, which resulted in a pregnancy, led to the pupil teacher's dismissal and his daughter's removal 'forthwith from the establishment'.<sup>19</sup> It is a matter of some credit to the Board that this incident did not guide it in its decision in relation to the headmaster's professional and administrative shortcomings.

In time, the remedial action taken by Keenan, in the estimation of his colleagues, James Patten and Thomas M'Illroy, had the desired effect. In their report for 1858 they expressed themselves completely satisfied as regards 'the zeal and efficiency' with which Johnston discharged his duties, and the 'conduct and diligence' of the pupil teachers.<sup>20</sup> Apart from some minor concerns, there was general satisfaction with the operation of Coleraine District Model School for most of the following decade. However, a steep decline in enrolment in the boys' school in 1866 was attributed, on investigation, to the unsatisfactory manner in which the school had been conducted during the year. Significantly, the inspector, J.G. Fleming, assured the commissioners that the necessary steps had been taken to place the school 'on a new and better footing'.<sup>21</sup> Taken in tandem with the 1857 report on Newry, it suggests inspectors were inclined instinctively to take a positive view of schools and not to notice or to highlight problems. This second instance of unrest had its origin in complaints by pupil teachers, in November 1866, 'as to [the] insufficiency and badness of the food supplied to them by the head teacher, Mr. Johnston'. On investigation, it was ordered that Johnston be transferred to Newtownstewart Minor Model School, and that the head master of that school be promoted to Coleraine, 'the change to take place as soon as practicable'. On this occasion, a belated disclosure by R. Irvine, the district inspector, of a further instance of immorality by a member of Johnston's family, coupled with the claim that the people of Coleraine had lost confidence in the school, forced William Newell, then chief of inspection, to the conclusion that 'all hope of lasting improvement must be

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<sup>16</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 29 Feb. 1856;

<sup>17</sup> *C.N.E.I.*, *Twenty-fourth report ... 1857*, App. A, pp 97 and 99.

<sup>18</sup> *N.A.I.*, ED3/2-126: 20 Nov. 1857.

<sup>19</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 11 Apr. 1856; *N.A.I.*, ED3/2-78: 3 Mar. 1857.

<sup>20</sup> *C.N.E.I.*, *Twenty-fifth report ... 1858*, App. B, pp 54 & 57.

<sup>21</sup> *C.N.E.I.*, *Thirty-third report ... 1866*, App. B, p. 104.

given up as long as Mr. Johnston and his family remain in the school'. In light of this, the Board rescinded its earlier decision and ordered that Johnston submit his resignation or face dismissal. It also reprimanded Irvine for 'fail[ing] to discharge his duty even with moderate firmness, having been tender and forbearing to a degree of negligence', and ordered his removal, without travel expenses, to another district. Fleming, the head inspector, was admonished for not having discovered the abuses earlier, and, when he was made aware of them, for omitting 'to report them at once, for the information of the Board'. A failure on the part of any of its officers to act expeditiously and decisively in matters of moral discipline invariably attracted the censure of the Board with serious consequences for economic and professional expectations.

The call for Johnston's resignation was opposed at the Board by Laurence Waldron, a Roman Catholic and M.P. for Co. Tipperary. He argued unsuccessfully that the case had been decided on 'incomplete information' and that all relevant documents should be made available to the Board before a final decision was arrived at.<sup>22</sup> This was something the Board was reluctant to do since, as Alexander Macdonnell revealed in evidence to the Powis Inquiry, decisions in such instances, other than those likely to prove publicly contentious, were the prerogative of the resident commissioner. The Board's voluntary nature and the need of its members to attend to their own professional callings determined that its role was essentially one of endorsement.<sup>23</sup>

Fleming and his new colleague, William Bole, accepted that all departments of the school had suffered on account of Johnston's deficient leadership, but their 'entire satisfaction' with the performance of the new head master - a Mr. Bresland, who was formerly the assistant master in Galway District Model School - and a steadily increasing attendance encouraged them to believe 'that the tide has now fairly turned, and that we may reasonably expect the school soon to attain a prosperous condition'.<sup>24</sup>

Because student-teachers were regarded as 'the future guides of youth', all instances of moral laxity were dealt with summarily, and serious breaches invariably resulted in instant dismissal. Significantly, the number of such incidents was few. At Clonmel school in 1852 a pupil teacher found to be suffering from a 'syphilitic complaint' was 'instantly dismissed'.<sup>25</sup> In the following year, a pupil teacher at Coleraine school experienced the same fate for inducing pupils, 'for a lengthy time past to bring bribes, as money, cigars, etc., with the object of giving the pupils higher classifications in

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<sup>22</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 20 Nov. 1866, 8 Jan, 5, 12 Feb. 1867.

<sup>23</sup> *Powis*, iv., 1047.

<sup>24</sup> *C.N.E.I., Thirty-fourth report ... 1867*, App. B, p. 108.

<sup>25</sup> *N.A.I.*, ED3/1-25: 10 May 1852.

return'.<sup>26</sup> In 1860, a pupil teacher was dismissed from the Galway establishment 'for attempting to fix a charge of theft upon some person'.<sup>27</sup> In 1862, two monitresses at the Belfast school who travelled to London in the company of three men were likewise dismissed. Some few years later two other females - their status is not stated - escaped with a reprimand, one 'for associating publicly with certain Military Officers', the other, 'for corresponding with an officer in the 60th India Regiment'.<sup>28</sup> Other dismissals, for unspecified instances of 'insolence' and 'misconduct', were recorded for Dunmanway and Galway model schools. While frowned upon, instances of intoxication and of visiting public houses merited merely a reprimand, even, as in Dunmanway, when the transgression was repeated. In other instances, infractions that were not considered sufficiently grave to merit dismissal, were punished, on occasion, by fines or by the termination of training. Two male senior monitors had their salary stopped in the Galway model school 'for disrespectful conduct towards the assistant teacher'. A pupil teacher at Dunmanway was fined 3s. for striking a pupil.<sup>29</sup> In Londonderry, one of three monitresses who had been reprimanded 'for climbing over the model school wall' was denied elevation to the rank of First Class Monitor.<sup>30</sup> It was recommended that a monitress at the Kilkenny school, who facilitated 'improper correspondence' between a pupil teacher and a girl in the female department, be removed when her second year of training was up.<sup>31</sup> The initial decision of the Board in the case of Thomas Anderson, a pupil teacher at West Dublin District Model School, was to order his dismissal 'for irregular conduct and utter indifference to his duties', having been 'frequently admonished and fined'. This was later rescinded, but only on the understanding that he could no longer be recognised as a pupil teacher. Presumably, this meant that he joined the ranks of the paid monitors.<sup>32</sup>

Mindful of its responsibility for the moral training of the junior staff, the Board was reluctant to allow their participation in activities outside of school hours even, as in Belfast, when they were not resident in the establishment. In August 1863, the head and district inspectors were authorised to prohibit certain monitresses and junior assistants 'from appearing before the public as singers at concerts held in the Victoria and Ulster Halls, and the Catholic Institute in Hercules Place'. An effort, the following year, to have this order rescinded, and to allow 'young ladies of the model school ... [attend] the practice meetings' of the 'Classical Harmonists', was unsuccessful.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>N.A.I., ED3/1-3: 26 Mar. 1853.

<sup>27</sup>N.A.I., ED3/3-57: 25 May 1860.

<sup>28</sup>N.A.I., ED3/4-8: 28 July 1862; ED3/4-174, 9, 10 Oct. 1866.

<sup>29</sup>N.A.I., ED3/2-116: 23 Apr. 1858; ED3/3-68, 19 Oct. 1860; ED3/4-191: 29 Nov. 1867, 22 May 1869; ED3/2-93: 5 Sept. 1856; ED3/3-124: 4 Jan. 1862.

<sup>30</sup>N.A.I., ED2/57-41: 23 June and 23 Nov. 1874.

<sup>31</sup>N.A.I., ED3/2-39: 18 July 1856.

<sup>32</sup>N.A.I., ED3/2-29: 28 July 1854.

<sup>33</sup>N.A.I., ED3/4-8: 15 Aug. 1863, 7 Dec. 1864.

The requirement that the junior staff be morally beyond reproach had obvious implications for the conduct of those in charge of them. Supervision of the teachers' behaviour in this area was pursued no less sedulously by the Board's inspectors, who, as we have seen, in respect of Coleraine School, were liable to be held culpable if transgressions in this quarter were not detected. As with the junior staff, instances of serious misconduct were rare. However, since the manner in which the Board dealt with these was crucial to the public image of the system, dismissal was the punishment invariably meted out in those cases where sustainable allegations of sexual impropriety were identified.

The response of the Board to an incident in the Athy school, in 1864, though it did not directly involve either a teacher of the literary school or a member of the junior staff, demonstrates just how anxious the commissioners were, in cases giving rise to serious scandal, to be seen to act decisively. At a Board meeting, held on 20 May, a letter from the parish priest of Athy, the Reverend Dr Quinn, was read, in which it was alleged that a servant at the model school, was pregnant 'by one of the principal teachers', and, furthermore, insinuated that the district inspector, M. Coyle, overlooked 'the series of scandal and demoralisation which have been going on for months'. William Ledlie, the agricultural instructor, was the putative father. Head inspector, Timothy Sheahan's investigation stated that Ledlie denied the charge. Fr Quinn, in a written statement to Sheahan, stated that Downey, in the presence of her mother and three sisters, had told him that Ledlie was indeed the father, but would not repeat that to the commissioners 'as she was about getting married very soon'. The Board found that Coyle had acted 'with great culpability' in not reporting to his superiors immediately on hearing of the rumours. 'To mark their displeasure', it was ordered that he be removed from the district. Ledlie was relieved of his position and 'declared ineligible for further service under the Board'. The final decision on the matter was that Fr Quinn should be informed of the action taken with regard to Ledlie. This had the desired effect. By return, a letter was received from Quinn

applauding 'the quick and impartial decision of the commissioners', and also stating that, with the exception of this case of immorality, he never heard anything of Mr. Ledlie that was not highly creditable to him.<sup>34</sup>

A similarly strict response was pursued in respect of the reported officiation of an un-named Presbyterian clergyman at the 'private' marriage ceremony of the headmistress of the infant department of Kilkenny District Model School. It was apparent that his role was prompted by his wish to save the teacher from the wrath of the

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<sup>34</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 20, 27 May 1864.



Board. Mrs Beresford, who gave birth to a child within six months of her 'official' marriage, was acquitted of the charge of cohabitation on production of a certificate issued by the clergyman in connection with the earlier ceremony. However, her conduct was judged to have been 'highly indiscreet and such as to give cause for scandal'. She was relieved of her position and, eventually, transferred to Londonderry District Model School as an assistant. Before the transfer could take place she was also charged with 'irregularity in keeping account of fees'. Michael Molony, the acting district inspector, concluded that the irregularity had arisen due to carelessness on Mrs Beresford's part, and recommended that the matter should be dealt with 'in a spirit of leniency'. Despite this plea, along with her own contrite apology, and an unqualified acceptance by the parent who had made the complaint of her '[total innocence] of any fraud', the transfer order was not rescinded.<sup>35</sup>

There are good grounds for considering that the practice of transferring teachers between model schools, in the absence of any request for such a transfer, or in cases where it was not advantageous to the teacher's career, was regularly appealed to, both as a means of discipline and as an effort to diffuse difficult local situations, whether within the school or the community. The Board's approach to the disciplining of Hamilton, an assistant teacher in the Kilkenny school, is a case in point. Both he and the agricultural instructor brought charges against the headmaster, Mr. Ryan, during the course of 1869. These appear to have related to Ryan's abuse of his position in the assignment of certain duties to the pupil teachers and in his management of the domestic department. Ryan, for his part, countered by forwarding to the Board a private letter from a lady to Hamilton. The charges were considered serious enough to have the Board direct that 'papers' on the matter be sent to commissioners James Gibson, a barrister, and John Lentaigne, Inspector of Prisons in Ireland, for comment. The investigation found against Ryan, and, furthermore, found that his wife, the headmistress of the girls' school, on occasion 'had the appearance of having drunk too much'. The Board accepted that her physician had directed her to take certain stimulants, but thought it right to inform her that it would be prudent 'to exercise very great caution to guard against evil consequences'. Hamilton's behaviour too did not escape censure, and the Board contended it was in the best interests of the school that he should be removed to another district model school when a position became available.<sup>36</sup> Before this could happen, Hamilton, most probably due to the uncertainty of his position, took umbrage at the turn of events, and, either injudiciously or purposely, used as a dictation exercise for the pupil teachers and agricultural boarders a passage from a work titled 'The Drunkard and the Confessor'. On being informed of the incident, the Board trenchantly condemned the

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 12 Apr., 31 May 1870.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 11 May 1869.

action, pointing out that the ‘fault [was] all the graver’ since it had taken place during the instruction of the pupil teachers ‘whose special duty it is to regard every lesson they receive or exercise they are called upon to perform as a model for their imitation when they themselves become teachers of National schools’. The Board declared it ‘an injury upon the pupil teachers of *all* creeds’, though specifically, and it was hoped unintentionally, on those who were Roman Catholics. Significantly, the Board’s indignation was not matched by its actions. By the time the investigation had concluded, Hamilton had already been removed from Kilkenny ‘for other irregularities’; he was transferred to Monaghan Minor Model School as an assistant teacher and no further sanction was imposed.<sup>37</sup>

This incident had severe repercussions for the Kilkenny school. In 1870, Roman Catholic pupils formed thirty-eight percent of those on rolls. By 1873, this had fallen spectacularly to just nine per cent. In the absence of documentary proof, one cannot claim conclusively that Hamilton’s action and the inadequacy of the Board’s response were responsible for the drop in Roman Catholic support but the timing is suggestive. The promotion of Ryan, a Roman Catholic, to the headmastership of the Central Model School in 1874, may also be significant. His wife, at this juncture, resigned her post. The replacement of the Ryans by another Roman Catholic couple, Mr and Mrs Samson M’Cotter, did nothing to reverse the decline in numbers.<sup>38</sup>

The justification for the transfer of James O’Driscoll, an assistant at Omagh Minor Model School, to the Inchicore school, in 1864, was not so clear cut. He was removed in an attempt to diffuse a potentially embarrassing situation. O’Driscoll’s relationship with a local woman, the wife of a doctor, would seem to have been the source of the embarrassment. He admitted that at a farewell visit to her house he presented her, while in the presence of her children, with a locket containing his portrait. A visit by this lady to Dublin in 1866, during which O’Driscoll visited her at her sister’s house, provoked the doctor into preferring a charge of seduction against him. Ultimately, this was withdrawn owing to the reluctance of other family members to participate in a public court inquiry. Despite this turn of events, O’Driscoll was dismissed and the facts of the case were specifically noted ‘should [he] enter the service at any future time’.<sup>39</sup>

The action of the Board in dismissing David Fitzgerald, assistant teacher at Newry District Model School, for what could be described as mild Rabelaisian banter with members of the opposite sex, could be viewed as a harsh punishment in light of the

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<sup>37</sup>N.A.I., ED3/4-102: 5 Apr. 1870.

<sup>38</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-seventh report ... 1870*, App. B, p. 102; C.N.E.I., *Fortieth report ... 1873*, App. B, p. 129; C.N.E.I., *Forty-first report ... 1874*, Appendix, pp 56 and 58.

<sup>39</sup>N.A.I., ED2/72-20: 22 Jan, 1864; ED2/16-156, 20 July, 7 Aug. 1866.

action taken in other more serious cases. Occurring, as it did, in 1859, at a time when discipline in general within the school was giving cause for concern, the severity of the decision was not surprising. An earlier incident, involving a member of the female staff who brought a work of a 'controversial' nature into the school, resulted in her being 'admonished severely'.<sup>40</sup>

The transfer of teachers between model schools was seen as putting errant teachers on notice, and failure to mend one's ways was likely to result in dismissal. P.J. Lyons, a singing teacher, who was transferred from the West Dublin Model School to Dunmanway in 1857, on the grounds that his behaviour with the female pupils and monitresses had been inappropriate, failed to take heed of this unofficial probationary arrangement. Within the year he was dismissed from the service for a number of offences including that 'of associating with low company'.<sup>41</sup> In Londonderry, the scandal which the assistant master's insobriety gave rise to led to a Board resolution that he should be transferred to Athy District Model School. This decision failed to check his behaviour, and, following his arrest for public drunkenness before the transfer went through, he was dismissed from the Board's service.<sup>42</sup>

Significantly, teachers whose infractions were not of a moral nature were more likely to be given a second or more chances to mend their ways. The teacher who was transferred most frequently for disciplinary reasons was Alexander Thane. In his case, what appears to have been a chronic inability to accept the authority of the headmaster, combined with a failure to apply himself, rather than any serious moral impropriety, were the primary source of problems. Thane is first encountered as assistant teacher in Galway. In December 1855, Head Inspector Newell recommended that he and the assistant in Dunmanway, Prentice, swop, 'owing to their misunderstandings with their respective principals'. Two years later Thane was transferred again, this time to Clonmel, while a female teacher in Dunmanway, Miss Cussan, was transferred to Bailieborough. Both were accused of 'acts of indiscretion and levity' - suggestive of a harmless dalliance - and warned that a repetition of such unseemly behaviour would result in dismissal. Thane stayed two years in Clonmel from where he was transferred to Waterford in July 1859 as a result of a disagreement with the head, Terence Smyth, over the food provided. The inspector did not come down in favour of either, but, having concluded that 'they will never again live in harmony', recommended that Thane be removed to Waterford District Model School. A further complaint against Smyth, this time investigated by Head Inspector J.E. Sheridan, found some of Thane's 'more serious charges [to] have been fully proved'. This came too late to save Thane, and while there

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<sup>40</sup>N.A.I., ED3/3-26: 19 Apr. 1858, 11 July 1859.

<sup>41</sup>N.A.I., ED3/2-111: 20 Dec. 1857; ED3/2-131, 28 Jan. 1859.

<sup>42</sup>N.A.I., ED2/57-40: 20 Apr., 10 Oct., 17 Nov. 1874.

is nothing on record to suggest that his behaviour gave any cause for concern at Waterford, his sojourn there was even more fleeting than in the previous schools in which he had served. He severed his connection with the Board and his resignation was accepted from 8 February 1860.<sup>43</sup>

Miss Cussan's brush with authority in Dunmanway in 1856 was also not her first. She had previously been transferred there from Limerick District Model School following unsatisfactory reports as regards the operation of the female department. A representation on her behalf against the transfer elicited from the Board the response that 'after the maturest consideration', and upon the unanimous view of the head and district inspectors, 'they are still convinced such removal was expedient for the interests of the school'.<sup>44</sup> Given this background, Cussan's translation to serve as headmistress of the girls' department at Bailieborough school is difficult to understand, since her activities in this capacity in Limerick had been unsatisfactory. A requirement that the Bailieborough vacancy be filled by a Roman Catholic may have been a factor, in that it limited the Board's choice. In any event, her association with the Bailieborough school was short-lived. In 1858 her department received a most favourable report from the inspector, but she had been replaced within a year by Eleanor M'Cotter. There is no recorded reason for this, but it may well have related to her marriage to the school's agricultural instructor, before the end of 1858.<sup>45</sup>

As in the case of inspectors, the teacher who failed to act promptly and to inform his superiors of cases of immorality was also likely to be deemed culpable of misconduct for which the usual sanction was removal to another school. When the Drawing Master, Brophy, at Clonmel District Model School was found to have conducted 'criminal intercourse' with one of the school's servants as a result of which she became pregnant, the assistant master, Mahon, who was aware of 'Brophy's misconduct', was transferred to Dunmanway District Model School. Needless to say, the Drawing Master was dismissed.<sup>46</sup>

### **8.3 External Supervision**

Though the instances of immorality just discussed illustrate that the Board had reason to monitor the conduct of students and teachers, the moral conduct of the candidate teachers in all the model schools was, in the main, beyond reproach. 'Favourable' reports far outweighed those of an adverse nature. The latter, as is the nature of things,

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<sup>43</sup>N.A.I. ED3/2-65: 28 Dec. 1855, ED3/2-116, 16 Oct. 1857, ED3/3-5, 15 July 1859, ED3/3-56, 8 Feb. 1860.

<sup>44</sup>N.A.I., ED3/2-100: 8 Nov. 1856.

<sup>45</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fifth report ... 1858*, App. B, p. 98; C.N.E.I., *Twenty-sixth report ... 1859*, App. B, p. 67.

<sup>46</sup>N.A.I. ED3/2-9: 20, 23 Jan. 1854.

were more inclined to be highlighted. The reference in Mark Anthony's panegyric on Julius Caesar to the ephemeral nature of the collective memory with regard to one's good deeds as opposed to the indelible record of one's failings is particularly apposite in this context. The reports, generally, dwell but briefly on matters commendatory, yet the following extract from the 1851 report on Trim District Model School, unusual in its detail, is representative of the pervading situation in most schools when there was no concerted campaign of interference from outside:

The harmony in which these teachers live together is a just subject for congratulation. There are six Roman Catholics and two Protestants always in the establishment, and I can positively state that the slightest interruption to the feelings of mutual regard and good will has never taken place. I am assured by those whose office entitles them to speak upon such matters, that they are all regular in their attendance to Divine Worship, and to their religious duties; and that they are deeply impressed with the truths of their own religion. This is one of the many proofs afforded by the system of national education that conviction can exist without controversy, and that young people of different religions may be educated together for all the purposes of social and civil life, not only without lapsing into any thing like indifferentism, but retaining a firm hold of their own peculiar tenets.<sup>47</sup>

Elsewhere we have seen that the prescribed denominational balance on the teaching staff, even where it no longer reflected the proportions of the various persuasions among the attendance, was maintained where possible. The evidence, though slight, and there is none to the contrary, indicates that scrupulous attempts were made in the day to day supervision of the junior staff to ensure that the religious beliefs of individuals received neither official favour nor disapproval. A deliberate effort, viewed by some as naive and by others as ill-considered, was made to adopt a neutral but supportive stance. Supervision of Roman Catholic pupil teachers on their way to and from Sunday Mass, by a teacher of similar persuasion, was normal, though the Board stopped short of paying for a pew in the Roman Catholic chapel in Trim for the use of the pupil teachers.<sup>48</sup> Exchanges of religious views were emphatically discouraged and attempts to initiate discussion, as happened when a pupil teacher introduced a 'tract' into Galway District Model School, could, as in this instance, result in an offender being 'admonished severely', and threatened with dismissal in the event of a recurrence. Three other pupil teachers, who presumably did not report the matter with due alacrity, were similarly reprimanded.<sup>49</sup>

In Ulster, where there was substantial Roman Catholic support - both lay and clerical - for the early model schools, it was always likely that this experiment in united education would be put to its severest test, and that any suggestion that it had an ameliorative

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<sup>47</sup>C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, App. B, p. 96.

<sup>48</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 29 Aug. 1850.

<sup>49</sup>*N.A.I.*, ED3/3-124: 25 July 1862.

effect in a province riven by sectarian suspicion and hostility would be closely scrutinised. Such an opportunity was seized on by P.J. Keenan in his comprehensive report on Belfast District Model School for 1857. Riots, 'which disgraced Belfast' the previous year, caused 'entirely ... by religious and political rancours', according to Keenan, had given rise to 'not A SINGLE CASE of dissension, either in the school room or the play-ground, or on the road to or from school ...'. This he regarded as even more gratifying considering that the proximity of the rioting to the school had caused the constabulary to use a building contiguous to the complex as a temporary barracks. The head inspector attributed this to 'the same lesson of peace' which was read daily throughout the Board's entire network of schools. This lesson, provided by Archbishop Whately and adopted by the Board, he reminded the commissioners

appositely begins by declaring that 'Christians should endeavour, as the Apostle Paul commands them, to live peaceably with all men, even with those of a different religious persuasion'. And it as forcibly concludes by announcing that 'Quarrelling with our neighbours and abusing them is not the way to convince them that we are in the right, and they in the wrong. It is more likely to convince them that we have not a Christian spirit. We ought, by behaving gently and kindly to every one, to show ourselves followers of Christ, who when he was reviled, reviled not again'.<sup>50</sup>

These claims, which gave solace to the Board at a time when Roman Catholic energies were increasingly directed towards a demand for denominational education, were later contested. Patrick Dorrian, Roman Catholic 'Bishop of Belfast'(sic), when invited to comment on this statement by the Powis Commission, declared, 'Well, I have heard the very contrary to that. I have heard that the children of the model school were, outside the precincts in the neighbouring streets, like the other rioters'.<sup>51</sup>

Dorrian's comment is indicative of an outlook unwilling to concede that any possible benefit could arise from united education. While he could accept that many of the national teachers were 'very properly trained - very well qualified', he was firmly of the view that the absence of a denominational ethos in the model schools was detrimental to both pupils and teachers. Speaking from experience, he claimed that

children trained in the model schools come from them with a tone that ... as members of society, is very objectionable. They to some extent become imbued with airs and notions that are unsuited to children; there is a degree of stubbornness, of indocility, of conceit about them, so much so that the children, whether boys or girls, when they come from a model school either to Christian Brothers' schools or to convent schools, are at once known, and until they are trained and brought into the tone of these schools they are considered a great drawback. I have a great objection altogether to the tone of the teachers themselves in the model schools. There is not a spirit of union or kindness amongst them, but of bickering and criticism of each other which I should be sorry to see spread among little children...<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fourth report ... 1857*, App. A, p. 64.

<sup>51</sup>*Powis*, iii, 360.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 346. In his evidence to the Commission, it is clear that Bishop Dorrian never entertained the

Dorrian, about whom Cullen had reservations when seeking a coadjutor for Down and Connor,<sup>53</sup> proved a warm supporter of the archbishop on the education question. Incidents of a sectarian nature at the Belfast school during 1860 were significant in reshaping attitudes and making it highly improbable that its mode of operation could retain the confidence of any Roman Catholic clergyman.<sup>54</sup>

It has already been noted that the Reverend John Lynch, parish priest of Harryville in Ballymena, had sought exemption for Roman Catholics from the requirement to use the Board's religious publications compiled by Archbishop Whately.<sup>55</sup> His efforts were instrumental in having the same protection accorded to junior staff as was in place for ordinary students seeking a primary education under the national system. Lynch, the first Roman Catholic clergyman to complain officially to the Board about the content of its publications, had supported the establishment of Ballymena District Model School. His first complaint - an objection to the song 'The English Child' - was registered in March 1850. It is noteworthy in that it was to the possible implication in the verse that Roman Catholic worship was idolatrous that he objected rather than to any offence to nationalist sentiment. That latter was not long in coming. By 1863, it was imputed that 'the children are compelled, in Pharisaical cant, to repudiate their native land - a happy *English* child'.<sup>56</sup> Lynch's objections were not only to Whately's *Lessons* ..., but also to parts of other Board publications, which he found to be 'exceedingly unjust and offensive'. His suggestion that a commission, comprising the head inspectors and heads of the various denominations, be appointed to carry out a general revision of the school books did not find favour with the Board. A further request from him was similarly denied.<sup>57</sup>

Thwarted in his efforts to secure the removal of the Board's religious publications, Lynch encouraged the Roman Catholic pupil teachers in the Ballymena establishment not to use them. Three complied. This set them on a collision course with the Board. The commissioners held firm and directed that a refusal to follow the rules in this matter should be punished by immediate removal. Two of the recalcitrants refused and pre-empted the Board's action by leaving, having been 'induced' to do so by Fr Lynch. In the recriminatory atmosphere that followed, the headmaster, John Given, did not

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same favourable attitude to the model schools as his predecessor Cornelius Denvir. It was ironic that he informed the inquiry that he himself had received his elementary education from a Presbyterian clergyman, whom, he claimed, had protected him from those who would have interfered with his morals.

<sup>53</sup> See Larkin, *Roman Catholic Church 1860-70*, pp 182-7.

<sup>54</sup> See below, pp 204-5.

<sup>55</sup> See Chapter V, p. 108.

<sup>56</sup> John Shelly, *Edmond Ignatius Rice and the Christian Brothers - a compilation* (Kilkenny, 1863), p. 88.

<sup>57</sup> *M.C.N.E.I.*, 7 Mar., 5 Dec. 1850; 4 Sept. 1851.

escape criticism. He was described as instrumental in facilitating the airing of controversial topics through his choice of subjects for the students' weekly essays, and was cautioned to avoid 'all matters of a religious or political nature' in future.<sup>58</sup>

Following a lull in the dispute lasting a number of months, Fr Lynch was again reported as having forbidden both pupil teachers and paid monitresses to read 'one of Professor Sullivan's "Literary Class Books"'. Furthermore, the head inspector informed the Board that the arrangement for removing the pupil teachers from the school every Friday for a period of religious instruction in the Roman Catholic chapel, would, if carried into effect be both inconvenient and seriously disruptive. At this stage, it was decided that Bishop Denvir, in his capacity as a commissioner, be made fully aware of all relevant correspondence, and, following the withdrawal of yet another Roman Catholic pupil teacher pursuant to Lynch's instruction, the bishop was requested to investigate. Essentially he came down in favour of the proposed arrangement regarding religious instruction. Moreover, he called the attention of the Board to the practice in the school of giving religious instruction to pupils of every persuasion 'promiscuously'. His recommendation that the school time-table be submitted for inspection by the Board was approved. In the interim, Bishop Denvir and Newell, the head inspector, were given the task of recommending 'suitable candidates as pupil teachers for the two existing vacancies'. Efforts to devise a time-table acceptable to Fr Lynch were apparently unsuccessful, as the focus now shifted from the specific religious instruction of the junior staff to 'Scripture Lessons' taught to the children. These the commissioners regarded as neutral in tone. Head Inspector Butler reported, in August 1853, that these lessons were taught 'indiscriminately' in Coleraine and Ballymena District Model Schools. He suggested that, as was 'the case of the other model schools', children of the Roman Catholic faith should be instructed apart from the other children by persons of their own persuasion 'approved by their clergy and parents'. The Board demurred, and indicated that it was really a matter for the parents to raise objection. It would seem that the objections were forthcoming, and, consequently *Lessons on the truth of Christianity...*, *Sacred Scriptures*, and *Sacred Poetry* were discontinued for use by Roman Catholic children. At the same Board meeting, Fr Lynch, by letter, unsuccessfully sought to influence the commissioners in their appointment of an assistant teacher, and to have the mistress of the infants' school, Eleanor Mary Cosgrave, 'exchanged for some other suitable person who would assist in teaching Catholic children Catholic music'.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 23 July, 2 and 27 Aug. 1852.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 6, 13 and 27 May, 5 Aug., 7 Oct. 1853.



Lynch's attention again turned to the requirement that the junior staff, as opposed to the children, would study, and presumably teach from, the same objectionable works. The refusal of a further two pupil teachers to use them obliged the Board to consider the matter again at a special meeting held on the 12 May 1854, at which it was decided, with the dissent of James Gibson recorded, that since the members of the junior staff were 'under the control of their parents they [were] not to be required to teach or be present at such reading'. However, the inspector was directed to ensure that there was a sufficient number of pupil teachers in the establishment to care for the needs of those who wished to be instructed from the books in question.<sup>60</sup> Although a logical consequence of the Board's decision in relation to Whately's books and their use by children in national schools, it was a significant victory, nonetheless, for Fr John Lynch, and indeed for common sense. It had the short-term effect of buttressing Roman Catholic confidence in the establishment, with the percentage of that denomination on rolls holding steady in the mid to low teens for the remainder of the decade. However, as happened in all but a few model schools, the proportion dropped sharply in the 1860s.<sup>61</sup>

An incident that occurred in 1855 is indicative of the sensitivity of the Board on the matter of religious instruction. In this instance Head Inspector Keenan's action in directing the Roman Catholic teacher in the school to accompany the children of that persuasion on their way to and from the chapel for religious instruction earned him a reprimand from the Board. Keenan explained that his only concern 'was to send someone responsible' along with them. The Board accepted that he had acted in good faith but regarded his conduct as 'indiscreet', restating, 'as a general principle', that arrangements for religious instruction in the district model schools should be left 'entirely to the parents and pastors interested in the matter'. This was later seized upon by J.W. Kavanagh to support his argument that the Board was hostile to Roman Catholic interests.<sup>62</sup> But Kavanagh was guilty of wilful misrepresentation. He chose disingenuously not to mention that the person who had brought the matter to the attention of the Board was, according to the official record, Fr John Lynch. To have done so would have undermined his own argument. It is not apparent why the priest chose this course of action. On the face of it was contrary to his own interests. It is certain, from his earlier representations, that he had reservations about the ability of the infants' teacher, Eleanor Mary Cosgrave.<sup>63</sup> It is probable that, at the time, had he gone along with the head inspector's arrangement, he would have weakened the case for the

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<sup>60</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 24 Feb., 16 Mar., 12 May, 9 June, 7 July, 9 Aug. 1854.

<sup>61</sup>Roman Catholics as a percentage of enrolment: 1855 - 15%, 1856 - 15%, 1857 - 17%, 1858 - 14%, 1859 - 14%, 1860 - 14%, 1861 - 6%, 1862 - 15%, 1863 - 6%, 1864 - 9%, 1865 - 6%. The data is taken from the relevant annual reports.

<sup>62</sup>Kavanagh, *Catholic case stated*, p. 191.

<sup>63</sup>*N.A.I.*, ED3/2-6: 9 June, 5 Aug. 1853.

appointment of a Roman Catholic assistant in the boys' school - a matter again under consideration. If this was his strategy, it proved successful, as Samson M'Cotter, a Roman Catholic and former pupil teacher at Coleraine District Model School was appointed early in the following month.<sup>64</sup>

Lynch's dispute with the Board was very much a local affair. Coming at a time when a majority Roman Catholic opinion was, if not positive, at least neutral towards model schools, it did not have a noticeable effect on bringing about a change of attitude. However, as the concerted effort of the hierarchy gathered pace, what were regarded as abuses in individual model schools achieved an increasingly prominent airing in the partisan press. In situations such as these, irrespective of the action taken by the Board to resolve conflicts, it was always likely that the popular Catholic nationalist mood would show little sympathy for official efforts, but would trumpet after a stark fashion the views and prejudices of its spiritual leaders.

Such claims were reinforced by a revealing account relating the experiences of a Roman Catholic pupil teacher, Denis McCurdy, at Ballymena District Model School in 1850. This was produced in evidence by J.W. Kavanagh at the Powis Inquiry, and, taken at face value, it offers some justification for the stance of Fr John Lynch on the need for safeguards for Roman Catholics, whether children or members of the junior staff. The detailed nature of the account suggest that it was, if not contemporary, written shortly after its author had left the establishment.

In general, the author claimed that in the national schools of Ireland the children were neglected by their pastors, Protestant and Roman Catholic. This he attributed to the fact that, unlike in England, where each denomination had 'the sole charge of their own schools, the imposition of the mixed principle in Ireland resulted in their showing little interest'. This lack of commitment on the part of both teachers and clergy led the pupils to view religion as 'a very secondary matter'. Thus,

instead of making Catholics and Protestants more charitably disposed towards each other, makes them more inclined to religious controversy, endeavouring to make them find out the weak points in each other's creeds, neither party knowing in what true religion consists - making it more a polemical study than a motive for the guidance of their actions.

The writer conceded that when he entered Ballymena District Model School in 1850 as a pupil teacher, he was 'unable to explain the Lord's prayer', but his claims that the school was unsupportive was more revealing and, if accurate, disturbing. The pervading

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<sup>64</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 6 July, 3 and 10 Aug., 5 Sept. 1855.

‘ethos’, despite regulation and the close supervision demanded by the Board, was one with which Roman Catholics were made uncomfortable:

The teaching-staff consisted of the master, Mr. John Given, three Catholic, four Presbyterian, and one Protestant pupil teacher. The master never interfered in our religious belief. No instruction in religion whatever of any sort given to the pupil teachers - might pray or not as we liked. The Protestant joined with the Presbyterians in the master’s room at night prayers. No morning prayers whatever. Two or three times I took the Catholic pupil teachers into the dining-room at night to say our prayers, but were interrupted by the others when their prayers were over, so gave it up.

For the Catholic pupil teachers there was worse than a negation of religious instruction, for though the master never interfered, the whole air of the place was non-Catholic. Craig [Thomas Hugh] said to me shortly after entering, that I was admitted because I was a ‘Romanist’. First time I heard the term applied to a Catholic. Had many polemical debates with the Protestant pupil teachers, such as the ‘Celibacy of the Clergy’, with Beatty [Archibald]; ‘the Infallibility of the Pope’, ‘the Inspiration of the Bible’ with Hewston [John]; about ‘Holy Water’ with Lamont [Matthew]. Brought to task by Craig for studying zoology on Sunday - he saying the Bible was the only book for that day. Protestant pupil teachers often whistled party tunes. On Ash-Wednesday, after coming from church, was asked by the school children did I get a rub with the burnt stick, meaning the ashes. The evil influence exerted on Catholic pupil teachers is heightened by the bigotry and prejudice of the town’s-people. An instance of their feelings may be gathered from a copy of a placard announcing a sermon in one of the Presbyterian chapels:- ‘Popery, A Modern Invention; the Anti-Christ of Scripture’ A Lecture by the Rev. Dr Stewart, in Wellington-street Church, on Sabbath evening, 23 March 1851.

From the above, it may be easily understood that when I left after the expiration of my year’s pupil teachership, I cared less for religion than when I started.<sup>65</sup>

### ***8.3 The Role of the Press***

From the late 1850s the nationalist press began to report in detail on incidents, involving individual model schools, that were likely to reflect badly on the system in general. Considering, that at the same time, the Roman Catholic hierarchy was becoming increasingly vocal in its criticism as a means of applying pressure on the government to support a parallel system under denominational control, this was a logical development.

The manner in which the press reported the dispute, in 1860, between the Board and Fr Alexander MacMullan, the parish priest of that part of Coleraine in the Dioceses of Down and Connor, indicated the extent to which this medium could shape perceptions. The extensive coverage did not confine itself to the individual school, but broadened its scope to take in those where it was alleged that gross abuses of a religious and moral nature had occurred. This, of course, whether intended or not, had the effect of suggesting that failings of this nature were common to all model schools.

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<sup>65</sup>Powis, vi, 989. The four persons named by McCurdy were all pupil teachers. Hewetson was of the Established Church, while the other three were Presbyterians. All four had served as national teachers prior to entering Ballymena District Model School. Of the 20 that were pupil teachers at some stage during 1851, 10 were Presbyterians, 7 Roman Catholics, and 3 Established Church. See C.N.E.I., C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, App. B, p. 146.

MacMullan complained that the appointment of a Presbyterian headmistress to the girls' school was in contravention of a tacit understanding that if the headmaster of Coleraine District Model School were a Presbyterian, the headmistress would be a Roman Catholic. The appointment of a Roman Catholic as the head teacher in the infant department failed to mollify the parish priest, as most Roman Catholic children of that age group attended the town's ordinary national school. The *Evening News* carried MacMullan's version of events and an account of the correspondence entered into.<sup>66</sup> This reveals that he was not content to confine his representations to contact with the education secretaries. An approach was made, without effect, to Board members James O'Ferrall and Thomas O'Hagan, Q.C. He also brought the matter on two occasions to the notice of the lord lieutenant. The use of the press can only be viewed as additional means availed of by MacMullan to exert pressure on the Board. When, eventually, the matter was investigated, in a move that was without precedent, the results were made public and they were printed in the *Morning News*.<sup>67</sup> From this account, it is clear that the Board investigation was of a very limited nature and did not address the contentious matter of the appointment. In fact, there is no reference in any of the Board records to the substantive issue being addressed. The only reasonable inference from this is that appointments were regarded as the sole responsibility of the Board acting on the advice of its officers. If this were the case, such a matter would have been treated as routine and dealt with by the resident commissioner. The official Board involvement was confined to considering MacMullan's reservations as to the Protestant teacher's suitability arising from her approach to religious instruction.<sup>68</sup>

While this was essentially a local issue, the Catholic *Evening News* sought to put it in a far wider context, noting it as just one of a number of instances which indicated the anti-Roman Catholic bias of the model school system. In an editorial comment, headlined 'Model Schools - The Sovereignty System', the writer referred to other named model schools and, in some cases, to specific incidents to sustain this impression.<sup>69</sup> As regards Coleraine, it alleged that efforts by a 'Catholic head inspector' [Keenan] to have the Board take action on a matter of moral concern went unheeded, and that his persistence in pursuing the matter elicited only a rebuke. The Board's commendable record on instances of this nature and the failure of any official record to advert to the matter must raise serious questions as to the accuracy of the report. Allegations against other named model schools must be viewed as similarly suspect. In the case of Ballymena District Model School it was the attitude of the headmaster, Given, that was

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<sup>66</sup>N.A.I., ED7/5: *Evening News*, 10 May 1860.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., *Morning News*, 8 June 1860.

<sup>68</sup>N.A.I., ED3/2-16: 28 Feb. 1860.

<sup>69</sup>N.A.I., ED7/5: *Evening News*, 10 May 1860.

presented as central to the controversy, the implication being that Fr Lynch was compelled to intervene from concern for the spiritual welfare of the Roman Catholic pupil teachers.<sup>70</sup> Official accounts, by contrast, suggest that it was the parish priest who was the pro-active agent. Regarding Newry District Model School, in reference again to an alleged incident on which there was an official silence, it was charged that the relations of a former inspector to one of the 'officers' of the model school 'were publicly known to be such as were not calculated, in their result, to improve the moral influence of the institution'.<sup>71</sup>

Model schools in Ulster had the greater potential for serious religious tensions. However, newspaper coverage was not limited to this province and this editorial in the *Evening News* had no hesitation in also listing a number of model schools elsewhere in Ireland. Its approach was typified by its readiness to dismiss 'the entire establishment' of the Central Model Schools as 'anti-Catholic in tone and feeling', and to extend this criticism to those officials who were not Protestant. Reference was duly made to the McGauley affair. Furthermore, it was claimed that one of the Presbyterian teachers in training afterwards 'got a clerkship in the office' and married one of the Roman Catholic mistresses in training, 'who became a Protestant with him'. In the West Dublin Model School, it was alleged that the first male assistant, a Roman Catholic, who had been reared in the family of Alexander Macdonnell, the resident commissioner, '[had] just become a Protestant'. The district model schools at Clonmel and Dunmanway, along with Farrahy Agricultural Model School, were described as 'notorious for misconduct, worthy of the worst days of the Charter schools'. Limerick and Galway District Model Schools, 'although not in so striking a degree, [had] their own special distinctions'.<sup>72</sup>

The lack of specificity, with regard to the last named schools, makes it difficult to divine the truth of these allegations. An earlier letter from 'A Coombe Weaver' in *The Morning News* provided some supporting detail on the assertion relating to West Dublin Model School. The 'second-master' of the school was described as 'a former domestic' in the Macdonnell household. Through the influence of the resident commissioner, the writer alleged that this 'Protestant neophyte' was about to be handsomely rewarded with a 'situation suitable to the higher social position of his new form of faith' in a city bank.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., *The Morning News*, 29 Mar. 1860.

Other problems in Newry District Model School at the time may have led to a claim of impropriety there not featuring in the official records. However, a later incident involving a teacher of French, Signor Mancini, an Italian residing in the town, was brought to the attention of the public by *The Irish Times*. Mancini, who had converted from Roman Catholicism to the Church of England, was always likely to be viewed with suspicion by the Roman Catholic community, especially considering the tensions between Italian nationalists and supporters of the Papal States at the time. Mancini unwisely made it known that he favoured the nationalists. He further compromised his position by speaking on the 'Italian question' to the Newry Protestant Young Men's Association in the local Orange hall. According to the paper, 'the Papists kicked up a row, and brought the matter before the commissioners'. The Board acted decisively, believing that his public stance was 'calculated to injure the interests of the district model school', and withdrew from him 'the privilege of using the room'.<sup>74</sup> In the annual report published for that year absolutely no reference was made to the action taken by the Board nor was there any suggestion that a Signor Mancini was at any stage associated with the Newry school. In the Board's defence it could be claimed that it was merely making available to him its facilities outside of school hours, and, as such, had nothing to do with the official arrangements for the school. It could also be argued that the Board's action was motivated by expediency, occurring at a time when Roman Catholic confidence in the establishment was beginning to slip.<sup>75</sup> It is difficult not to favour the latter assessment and to acknowledge the influence that Macdonnell could bring to bear, whether in deciding what was considered by the Board, or what appeared in its official reports. As the investigation of the Whately controversy revealed, he was not beyond concealing matters from other commissioners, or of overseeing the suppression of potentially embarrassing sections from annual reports, as Kavanagh and Keenan learned.

The most damning public indictment of a model school on the intertwined issues of religious tolerance and private morality, occurred in respect of the Board's showpiece - Belfast District Model School. This institution had got off to an auspicious start when all clergymen involved in the superintendence of religious instruction provided written testimony as to their satisfaction.<sup>76</sup> Fr Richard Marner, a Roman Catholic curate, undertook the duties of chaplain from the time of opening in 1857, but withdrew during the course of 1859 on his 'promotion to a professorship'. According to the *Report* for that year he had 'expressed himself highly pleased with [the pupils] progress' to date.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., *The Irish Times*, 21 July 1860.

<sup>75</sup>Roman Catholics as a percentage of total enrolment: 1857 - 43%; 1858 - 41%; 1859 - 39%; 1860 - 32%; 1861 - 36%; 1862 - 35%; 1863 - 25%. Data is taken from relevant annual reports.

<sup>76</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fourth report ... 1857*, App. A, pp 61-2.

<sup>77</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-sixth report ... 1859*, App. B, p. 71.

But there are some grounds for questioning the accuracy of this summation since it is also recorded that Marner preferred a charge of proselytism, in July 1859, against the Reverend Thomas Prentice, an Independent minister, who had at one time been a lay teacher at the school. Arising out of this, it is more likely that the irresolute response on the part of the Board to Marner's complaints caused him to sever his ties with the establishment.<sup>78</sup> Marner himself, in a letter to *The Evening News* in December 1859, claimed that 'perversion' had been carried out in Belfast District Model School and that the rules had been 'changed or so modified as to suit the views of its Presbyterian element'.<sup>79</sup> These allegations related to changes in the allocation of senior staff and the denominational composition of junior staff. And, should there have been any doubt, Marner made it abundantly clear, based on the manner in which his earlier complaint had been dealt with, that he had little confidence in the commissioners.

His most serious charge, however, related to an incident in the junior staff residential quarters on the model farm. Known as 'The Mock Confession', it became a *cause celebre* for those who wished to denigrate the efforts of the Board. It would appear that, following the departure of the Roman Catholic pupil teachers to receive the Sacrament of Penance on 10 December 1859, a number of pupil teachers and agricultural Boarders remaining in the residence staged their own 'mock' confession. This was first brought to the notice of the Board by Fr Marner on 17 December. He claimed that the ringleader 'of this outrage on Catholic feelings' was the person who, in the absence of the headmaster, was entrusted with the '*sole superintendence of the entire staff of pupil teachers*'.<sup>80</sup> Possibly on account of the lengthy nature of the investigation into the offence, the Board was not in a position to take action until 11 May 1860, when it was ordered that two of the agricultural boarders be at once removed along with one of the pupil teachers. Another pupil teacher lost his annual gratuity and a further one was 'severely admonished'. Eight others, though not involved, were 'reproved for remaining in the room, even as witnesses of an exhibition, so entirely discreditable and so opposed to the spirit in which they were placed ...'.<sup>81</sup>

The response of sectarian interests to the Board's efforts to be seen to deal honestly and rigorously with the matter were entirely predictable. The Roman Catholic *Morning News* claimed that it '[blushed] to write that about 280 Catholic children still attend that precious model school'. It added, for good measure, that one of the Roman Catholic

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<sup>78</sup>N.A.I., ED3/3-23: 1 July 1859; *M.C.N.E.I.*, 1 July 1859.

<sup>79</sup>N.A.I., ED7/5: *The Evening News*, 17 Dec. 1859.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup>N.A.I., ED3/3-24: 11 May 1860.

schoolmistresses '[had] openly abandoned her faith'.<sup>82</sup> On the other hand *The Evening Packet* assured its readers that

in following up their protest against the injustice done to their pupil teachers ... the Presbyterian clergy are receiving the warm support of their people. ... Distrust of the management of the system has been increasing for some time among the members of the General Assembly.<sup>83</sup>

The incident inflamed Presbyterian passions in Belfast throughout the autumn and early winter of 1860, and prompted the counter charge that Roman Catholic teachers were not loyal to the Crown. In early October at a meeting of the Belfast Presbytery, the clergymen Johnston and Hanna declared their allegiance to be suspect. Furthermore, they alleged that the Roman Catholic teachers of the model school manifested 'Young Ireland principles', and called on the school's inspectors to inquire into that fact.<sup>84</sup> At the end of the month *Saunders Newsletter* reported that the commissioners were 'cancelling censure' on certain pupils - those who were not present and those who, though present, took absolutely no part.<sup>85</sup> Despite sustained pressure from the Belfast Presbytery, the Board held firm and refused to mitigate in any way the punishments imposed. At best, it held out the hope that those dismissed could be appointed to positions in ordinary national schools under local management, but never to schools under the commissioners' direct patronage. If anything it was the Belfast Presbytery which failed to maintain unanimity. Early in 1861 a letter was received by the Board from the Reverend A. Montgomery of Lisburn, stating that the earlier representations on the part of the Reverend Johnston were 'not authorised by the Presbytery'.<sup>86</sup>

This was the last mention of an incident which had caused the model schools much difficulty. While probably coincidental, such incidents provided an ideal opportunity for those challenging the role of the Board at a higher political level. It would be difficult to argue that the growing truculence of the Roman Catholic hierarchy was not an important influence in determining the behaviour of the individual clerical protagonists. At the same time, the issues were local and the Board's response was inadequate, or at best tardy, in the face of incremental accruals of objectionable incidents. Crucially, the Roman Catholic clergymen interested in the welfare of their flocks in the district model schools at Ballymena, Coleraine, and Belfast - Lynch, MacMullan and Marner - were each sufficiently determined to have the Board heed their concerns. In the case of the last two, they had ready access to the press to promote their cause.

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<sup>82</sup>N.A.I., ED7/5: *The Morning News*, 7 Sept. 1860.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., *The Evening Packet*, 13 Sept. 1860.

<sup>84</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 5 Oct. 1860.

<sup>85</sup>N.A.I., ED7/5: *Saunders Newsletter*, 31 Oct. 1860.

<sup>86</sup>N.A.I., ED3/3-70: 21 Dec. 1860; *M.C.N.E.I.*, 9 Nov., 14 Dec. 1860, 11 Jan. 1861.



The influence of the press was most effective when delving into the more sensational charges levelled against individual model schools, but it had an overall detrimental impact on their reputation as institutes of elementary education and teacher training. The Roman Catholic mood is best summed up by the willingness of the *Morning News*, inspired by the more sensational accusations levelled against the model school system, to lampoon the opening of Parsonstown Minor Model School in 1860. In an effort to sustain opposition, it mischievously proposed that the commissioners should have given the ‘Catholics of Birr’ a clear idea of the future of the institution in dramatic form, through a public rehearsal of

babies from Clonmel and Coleraine, flirtations from some model schools, sentimental flights from others, religious feuds from all, pervers from many, but especially, they should have *done* Rev. Mr. Prentice, bidding a crown a piece for the souls of the Catholic pupils in the Belfast Model School, winding up the performance with the assistant masters holding the ‘Mock Confessional’ in the same blessed establishment ... a few inspiring mottoes *Common Christianity, We are happy English children, The priests repudiate the System but they do not repudiate the money ...*

The writer held that if this were done in each locality in which it was intended to open a model school, the performance being put on in the week before opening, ‘it is not probable that the Catholic clergy will be left much to do, in the way of condemning these establishments’.<sup>87</sup> If the satirist accurately reflected the popular mood, it would be difficult to deny his claim, and difficult to fathom the Board’s indifference.

Significantly, the interest shown by the press in model schools coincided with Archbishop Cullen’s growing aggressive stance on all aspects of the national system and on the model schools in particular. Press coverage highlighted the increasingly difficult environment in which the Board now found itself. Derided in the press, under increasing parliamentary scrutiny, and suffering from a steady decrease in Roman Catholic support, the disingenuous attitude displayed by the Board, best exemplified by the efforts of its resident commissioner to ignore the unpalatable and suppress internal criticism, suggested that unless radical reform was undertaken the entire model school initiative was in danger of foundering.

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<sup>87</sup>N.A.I., ED7/5: The Morning News, 8 Nov. 1860.

## Training and Efficiency

As shown above, the early teacher training provided by the national system was heavily influenced by the approach of the Kildare Place Society. However, with the advent of the first model schools, less reliance was placed on a strict monitorial system. There was a decided shift towards an accommodation of more recent developments that promoted the novel idea of class teaching. This more involved system had implications for the course of study and training with respect to duration and content. The natural corollary of increasing sophistication was the need for candidate teachers of higher academic calibre. This was not always possible, and, where it was, there was the difficulty of maintaining the correct balance between individual advancement and a better understanding of the pedagogic process. Furthermore, there was a distinct gender divide. The course for females was less demanding academically and, reflecting the thinking of the time, did not envisage as influential a role for them in society. In fashioning, implementing and monitoring the course of training the role of the inspector was pivotal. The influence of the Board's more reflective officers was considerable in shaping its expectations. On all inspectors rested responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the programme, controlling standards through examination, and assessing its overall effectiveness. Of all the commissioners, Archbishop Whately was the only one to display an abiding interest in the philosophy of education. His concern with the economic basis of class structure and a need to promote the ideology of the dominant *elite* ensured that much attention was paid in the training programme to the role of the male teacher as a mediator of and apologist for the values of the ruling class.

### 9.1 The 'Mixed' System

The early 1840s witnessed a decided effort to shift away, from the narrow, mechanistic monitorial approach of Bell and Lancaster to a mixed system promoted by Robert Sullivan, Professor of Training at the Central Training Establishment. This, it was claimed, combined the advantages of the monitorial method of instruction with the relatively recent development of 'simultaneous' teaching. It was believed that under this conflated system, education would be imparted in the most efficient manner possible, with 'every pupil [kept] constantly at work, and every minute [turned] to account ...'<sup>1</sup>. The support forthcoming for this approach determined that it would be the one that would receive official approbation in the fledgling model school network, even if many of the monitorial system's more regimental aspects proved to be enduring.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Sullivan, *An outline of the general regulations and methods of teaching in the male national model schools - for the use of teachers in training* ('Not published', Dublin, 1840), p. 4.

The development of the 'simultaneous' system was attributable to the Scottish educationalist David Stow, and it constituted an alternative, more humane approach to that favoured by Lancaster and Bell. It had faith in the innate potential of the child. Stow's involvement in education was motivated by his anxiety to improve the lot of Glasgow's impoverished. Instruction on its own, and even with the reading of Scriptures in school, he believed was not effective in diminishing vice and crime, 'nor are the manners and habits of the masses at all improved'. Education, he held

consists not in the mere amount of knowledge communicated, but in the due exercise of all the faculties whereby the pupil acquires the power of educating himself. It is a mould for the formation of character.<sup>2</sup>

Progress could be made only through direct moral training, in suitable premises and using various practical methods, 'under well-instructed and well-trained masters or mistresses'.<sup>3</sup>

The problem was that when Stow first turned his attention to education at the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century the commonly held view, even in Scotland, was that it was not necessary to train the schoolmaster. With this attitude of indifference and absence of regulation

every teacher worked himself into any method he pleased, and just as he could, without guide or adviser, and was left, while serving an apprenticeship to himself, to cut and carve the persons and minds of the children, under his care entirely according to his own fancy. The candidate teacher had no model school *to look at*, far less a Normal Seminary *to be trained in*.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the direct moral training, Stow advocated the teaching of the usual subjects of the elementary school through what he termed 'picturing out in words'. This demanded close interaction between the teacher and the child and involved a number of strategies all of which had to be pitched at the child's level of understanding. His dictum was

give the child early and clear perceptions of elementary subjects, and *correct habits of thought and action*, and through life he will be able to teach and train himself. ... *Quality*, therefore, is more the object of the Training System than quantity.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>David Stow, *The Training System of Education, including moral school training for large towns, and normal seminary, for training teachers to conduct the system*. (11th ed., enlarged, London, 1859). pp 14-5.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

In proposing that the learning process be a collaborative effort between the teacher and the child, Stow's philosophy differed radically from those of Bell and Lancaster. From a practical point of view he also provided a novel and most valuable addition to teaching practice - children were grouped according to their ability. Teaching, however, was still essentially on an individual basis. Stow, as he developed his system, discovered that he could teach certain subjects to groups of children *simultaneously*. This was carried out in the *Gallery* - a tiered area adjoining the main classroom. Thus the 'gallery lesson' was the nascent form of what became the mainstay of school instruction - the class lesson.

Stow had very firm ideas also on how best candidate teachers could be introduced to, and become competent in, his system of teaching. In this his ideas were not so readily adopted in Ireland. He was dismissive of the use of monitors for anything but the most menial of tasks, and decried the practice of entrusting the instruction of the junior classes to their care. This, he believed, served only to increase the work of the head or assistant teachers when at a later stage they had to attempt to undo the harm. The question, according to Stow, was 'whether a young untrained and inexperienced boy or lad shall take the place of a mature and cultivated master?'. In what other occupation, he wondered, would the public be satisfied with the apprentice being given such an important role:

Monitors, who are apprentices in the art, cannot, and do not, do the work of teaching, far less of training. In employing monitors, we have the semblance but not the reality of education.<sup>6</sup>

In Ireland, the monitor, both paid and unpaid, and the more elevated position of pupil teacher were regarded as integral not only to the training system but also to the augmentation of teaching power. This, Stow would have regarded as an anathema under his method. Candidate teachers in model schools were present in the school-room as observers only. They did not have a teaching role. On progressing to a 'normal' college, they could then practice the art of teaching. Even here, drawing on twenty years' experience, Stow urged the separation of the instruction of the candidate teacher and instruction by him. Ideally, he suggested that the course in the normal college should extend over three years, with the first two given to the instruction of the teacher, and the final year 'exclusively confined to the practical ...'. If the two courses lacked clear delineation, as they did in the Marlborough Street training establishment, he suggested that the acquisition of knowledge rather than expertise in the practical work of intellectual and moral training would predominate. This was a criticism levelled against the Dublin institute by various Board officers at the Powis Inquiry. They charged that the emphasis on the academic, and the professorial approach to teaching resulted, at

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 311.

best, in insufficient time being given to practice in teaching, and, at worst, cultivated in the teachers in training a supercilious attitude fuelled by a combination of dilettantism and pedantry.<sup>7</sup>

The earliest detailed reference to the teaching method to be employed in the model schools is that contained in Edward Butler's 1849 report on Newry District Model School. He informed the commissioners that 'collective' lessons in arithmetic, geography and natural history were 'frequently' given in the gallery by either the headmaster or by pupil teachers. Defects noted by the head inspector in the delivery of the gallery lessons related both to teachers and pupils. Of the former he reported a 'want of confidence, useless repetitions, and a tendency to discursiveness, from want of preparation'. 'Listlessness and mental indolence' was evident among the pupils.<sup>8</sup> He supported his analysis with a lengthy extract, titled 'Remarks upon Collective Teaching' from the 'Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education' in England for 1847. This expressed concern with the manner in which 'simultaneous teaching' on the Glasgow model was being implemented in the best English schools. As with the monitorial system, Her Majesty's Inspector J. Fletcher, the author of the 'Remarks ...' believed that certain weaknesses would have to be addressed. He was particularly exercised by the tendency of the teacher to over-rely on 'collective' or group answering to the neglect of individual questioning. Collective answering - 'all together' - he regarded as but 'a useful climax' to a period of individual questioning 'to which all are held liable in rapid and irregular succession'. This approach, he believed, encouraged concentration and reasoning on the part of the child. The antithesis of this he found in schools in which the monitorial system was still favoured. Here the instructional emphasis was 'purely individual to each child in succession, while all the others await[ed] their turn in ill-disciplined indolence of mind'. The greatest problem, as Fletcher saw it, was the transitionary period in a school changing from monitorial to collective teaching. Where this was attempted, the practice was to introduce the newer method in the senior part of the school. This he believed resulted in the older method being regarded with 'a rather premature contempt', leading to neglect in the preparation of monitors and with the resultant fall in its effectiveness. Mindful of the pecuniary constraints under which schools laboured, Fletcher argued for the retention of the monitorial system and its use throughout the entire school in conjunction with collective teaching based on the simultaneous method. The government decision of the previous year that candidate teachers would commence their training in the country's elementary schools made it imperative that defects in both systems were attended to as a matter of priority.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>See *Powis* iii, 273 and 526 (evidence of P.W. Joyce and J.W. Kavanagh), iv, 1099, 1173 and 1210 (evidence of W.H. Newell, Edward Sheehy and Thomas O'Hara).

<sup>8</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, App. G, pp 192-3.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, App. G, 'Remarks upon Collective Teaching', pp 212-16.

Given the thrust of Fletcher's remarks, its inclusion in the 1849 *Report* suggests that it was the Board's intention that both systems should be accommodated in the training programme applied in Ireland. This is confirmed in P.J. Keenan's revealing reports of the mid-1850s. In his 'Head Inspector's Report' for 1855 he strongly encouraged the inclusion of collective teaching in the Board's schools where facilities were suitable. However, this was only possible in the 4.5 per cent of the schools within his circuit with a classroom and gallery. Class-lessons in the gallery, he believed, were 'much more subject to control and persuasiveness and instruction' than those conducted at the desks or with the children gathered at certain locations within the ordinary classroom. Even in some of the district model schools he found the Lancastrian plan prevailing to such a degree 'that there [was] generally but one classroom for the three schools - male, female, and infant'. Using the advances of the Industrial Revolution by way of analogy, he claimed that

method and gallery are to the teacher what steam and machinery are to the cotton spinner; method is power, and the gallery is the instrument by which this power can be most economically and effectively employed.<sup>10</sup>

He returned to this theme in 1856. In larger schools, with sufficient teaching power, he envisaged a tripartite division of the student body - junior, middle and senior. The headmaster took *special* charge of the older group, an assistant teacher instructed the middle group, while - and contrary to what Stow advised - a pupil teacher could be entrusted with the junior division. Throughout the day the various groups were taught at their desks, on the floor, or in the gallery, changing at regular intervals with the minimum of disruption. Monitors would be employed in instructing the various drafts, or subdivisions of the three main groupings. Keenan saw the role of the headmaster as crucial to the success of this arrangement. Besides instructing the senior pupils, he was expected to go from draft to draft, 'revising what has been done by the monitors, and giving the substance of the lesson for the time being to each class as he passes along'. His influence was expected to be pervasive. According to Keenan

the golden rule ... is, that the teacher as well as the pupil is constantly employed; that he has a special duty for every moment of the day; and that he discharges this duty in such a way that he can superintend the whole of the operations of his school.

Keenan regarded this system as intrinsically different from that of Lancaster and Bell. Primarily, he believed they placed an over-reliance on mutual instruction - 'more ... than experience has proved to be sound in principle or beneficial in practice'. Secondly, the system was wasteful on grounds of economy. Three times the number of monitors were

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<sup>10</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-second report ... 1855*, App. G, p. 52.

required for a school conducted on the Lancastrian plan than were needed in one of a similar size on the tripartite system. In drawing the curtain on this particular method, Keenan acknowledged the seminal role of Lancaster in the promotion of popular education. Monitors still had their uses. However, the mistakes of Lancaster must not be repeated. He enumerated the 'grievous errors' attributable of that system as follows:

... they [the promoters] did not select children who were sufficiently mature and intelligent for their duties; ... they required them to teach more than they were prepared for; ... the balance of the double capacity of the monitor, as teacher and pupil, was not maintained; ... there was no course of special instruction given to them to qualify them for their duties and to make up for whatever time they were employed in teaching; ... they were not required to prepare themselves for the lessons which they were called upon to teach; ... they were employed at random, had charge of no particular class, and had no set course of instruction to impart; ... the teachers were not properly drilled, trained, or qualified to control or prepare the monitors for their duties, and, above all, ... the main, the higher, the essential part of the education of the pupils, was not given by the teachers themselves.

The 'most fatal' error, according to Keenan, was that relating to the 'double capacity' of the monitor as both pupil and teacher. In practice the pupil's employment all day as a monitor deprived him of the instruction he required as a student. When this happened 'the fabric began to totter ... the old structure was doomed, it soon crumbled away, and lay in ruins and unrespected dust'. The total rejection of the monitorial system in many parts of Europe, particularly in Prussia, Keenan viewed as 'nearly as deep an error as the original mismanagement of the disciples of Lancaster and Bell'. In his view, the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, had got the balance right:

The system was always worked with moderation: it was free from the wild pretensions of the plans of Bell and Lancaster; and the pupillary and monitorial functions were happily coalesced.

Keenan viewed the establishment of district model schools, with their staffs of pupil teachers, and the extension of the training system, which by the mid-1850s had as its lowest level the junior paid monitor, as a 'further development'. This initiatory stage lasted three years, and candidates were eligible from the age of eleven. At the pinnacle of the hierarchical structure was the pupil teacher, drawn, in most cases, from 'the elite of those [senior] monitors who had completed their fourth year of service'. Keenan took care to distinguish between the functions of pupil teacher and monitor - 'the former is more of a teacher than a pupil; the latter more of a pupil than a teacher'.<sup>11</sup> In practice, within the model school system, there was little distinction as regards teaching duties.

The opening of Belfast District Model School, in 1857, gave Keenan a further opportunity to express his concern with the enduring (and to his mind

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<sup>11</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-third report ... 1856*, App. B, especially pp 160-7.

counterproductive) practices of the purely monitorial system which were still to be found in the working of large schools. Principal among these was the role adopted by the teacher - that of superintendent not of instructor:

The teachers walk about, overlook, and issue orders, but they seldom condescend to engage in the drudgery of the teaching. The head teacher has his subordinates, and these in turn find deputies in their monitors. The school is regarded as a machine; the teacher sets it in motion, and watches its action.

In the case of the model school Keenan considered these 'vicious influences' to be at their most dangerous, since junior staff trained there would 'imitate the conduct of those who had undertaken their training' in their own schools. As a means of guarding against this, Keenan explicitly commanded the senior staff to participate directly in the programme of instruction and in the encouragement of the junior staff, and demanded that they exclude all activities not immediately connected with their teaching duties:

I laid down the principle ... that every person in the establishment, at every moment of the school day - recreation time only being excepted - should be actively employed, the teachers instructing and the pupils learning. I prohibited all letter-writing, all clerking, and all duties extraneous to teaching, during school hours. I interdicted the performance of business of a private nature on the school premises ... I specially cautioned the head teachers against the evils of *superintendence*, and I requested them to show themselves to their assistants and their pupil teachers as fellow labourers, as toilers in their cause and their interest, and as participators in their anxieties and their fatigues.<sup>12</sup>

Keenan's account of the daily working of the Belfast school would indicate that the staff abided by these directions faithfully, providing, as an ideal for all model schools, the epitome of organisation and method to which junior staff in training might aspire. While the report strongly recommends a shift from individual to collective teaching, the organisation of the school - which Keenan described as 'performed with almost military precision' - still followed the monitorial model in its mechanistic and rigid structure.<sup>13</sup>

Keenan's ideas on education and approach to teaching and school management were further developed by P.W. Joyce (1827-1914), who came under his influence during the course of the 1850s. Joyce's first appointment under the Board (though not its first choice) was as headmaster of the West Dublin school in 1851.<sup>14</sup> In 1856 he was one of fifteen specially chosen to undergo the course for 'Organisers' under Keenan. This was a practical initiative by the head inspector to raise the standard of teaching through making available to schools, for short periods, the services of highly trained and dedicated teachers. Following this work in providing on-the-job training for practising teachers in various parts of the country, Joyce was appointed headmaster of the Central

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<sup>12</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fourth report ... 1857*, App. A, p. 70.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, Organisational arrangements are detailed on pp 70-5.

<sup>14</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 17 April 1851.



Model School in 1860. His most enduring work in the educational field *A handbook of school management and methods of teaching*, first published in 1863, ran to twenty-five editions during his lifetime and sold approximately 100,000 copies. Joyce intended this primarily as a practical help to teachers in guiding them in matters of everyday organisation and in teaching method. Quickly, it became the principal prescribed textbook for examination at all levels within the system. Only in the 1890s, as Coolahan has observed, was its approach called into question by a number of inspectors who argued that its very emphasis on the practical denied teachers a deeper appreciation of their role as educators.<sup>15</sup>

### ***9.2 The Course of Training***

When first mooted, the course for pupil teachers was expected to be of six months' duration. In practice, a year-long programme was put in place from the start, as concerns were voiced about the academic ability of many who presented themselves for selection. The Board's deferment of the inclusion of females on this course, arising in part from its reluctance to provide them with residential accommodation, obliged girls to follow the longer, though less demanding, paid monitorship programme. Later, though never a general practice, some who completed this course were elevated to the rank of pupil teacher, but resided outside the establishment. The official view - and this pertained wherever practicable throughout the national system - was that, while denominational mixing was something to be desired, the intermingling of the genders should be avoided at all costs.

Within each model school the performance of the junior staff was closely monitored and recorded by the heads of departments. In addition, candidates were examined by the officers of the Board during their inspectorial visits. For pupil teachers, a mid-course examination, based on a detailed knowledge of the entry programme, was followed by an end of course examination the same as, and held in conjunction with, that for teachers of national schools awaiting classification. These latter, denominated as 'probationers', were either totally lacking in formal training or had taken the course for paid monitors in ordinary national schools.

This practice of allowing a dual means of entry into the profession was not viewed with favour by the inspectorate. In the early days of the district model schools it was understood that it was but a temporary measure adopted as a matter of expediency. The completion of the network of model schools - one for each inspectorial district - was expected to signal its demise. J. W. Kavanagh described, in his first report from Clonmel District Model School, 'the training and instruction of the pupil-teachers, or

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<sup>15</sup>For a review of Joyce's *Handbook*, see Coolahan, 'The contribution of P.W. Joyce ...' pp 82-5.

apprentices' as 'the object of greatest solicitude', second only to the efficient operation of the schools. '[E]ight skilful, intelligent, and practical teachers' he assured the commissioners would be sent out each year. Within a few years, he stated, when there might be up to ten district model schools, 'such a number will be scattered through the country as must produce most beneficial influence on the state of the schools and of education'. He was confident, moreover, that the training they received would bring about the improvement of the junior staff, with regard not only to their ability as communicators and controllers, but also in respect of their personal mental and moral development:

Gradually they acquire habits of command, and of securing and sustaining the attention of the pupils; practice and example give them tact, vivacity, and firmness; slowly and cautiously they are entrusted with a higher charge according as they show increased moral and intellectual fitness, and by the close of the year they have entered on every detail connected with the management of a school.<sup>16</sup>

Edward Butler was not quite so hopeful in his report on Newry District Model School, also in 1849. He merely expressed the hope that those trained would prove to be better qualified 'than the class of persons who now enter upon the duties of a teacher'. Of the first cohort in training, three had taken up employment as teachers - the fourth had died of consumption. Butler was happy to learn that 'they are giving every satisfaction to their employers', and had reason to believe that

these young men are thus respectably provided for, and if they carry into their new situations the same steadiness of purpose, the same attention to business and anxiety for improvement, the same contentedness of mind with which they were animated during their stay in the District Model School, I confidently hope the good fruits of this early training will be abundantly evident when they are called up by the commissioners for further training in the Normal Establishment in Dublin.<sup>17</sup>

In 1852, head and district inspectors, James Patten and Eugene A. Conwell, in their joint report on Bailieborough District Model School were convinced that in its training role - 'that *one* great, if not, indeed, *the* great object' - established by the commissioners had been realised. Managers of ordinary national schools could now employ persons 'trained in the art of teaching' rather than having to resort to those 'with little recommendation beyond a smattering of undigested information' whose motives were suspect, being attracted to teaching 'as a mere *speculation*'. The beneficial effect which these newly trained teachers would have, not only on their pupils, but, in time, on society at large, was assured:

Little as is sometimes thought of it, the mission of the teacher is one of great interest, and perhaps second to none in responsibility and power. It is his to form and mould the

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<sup>16</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, Appendix, p. 270.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, pp 198, 201.

age; and in proportion as he labours effectively in his important vocation, will a higher type of society be realised.<sup>18</sup>

Keenan, more succinctly than most, sketched out the bipartite course of instruction, both theoretical and practical, that would further the Board's aims and equip the candidates with the qualifications and qualities necessary for their future occupation:

The pupil teachers and monitresses will receive a sound education in literature and science, and, at the same time, undergo an extensive course of training in the practical details of their future profession. They are to receive instruction upon the art of teaching, upon the organisation of schools, upon the government of children, upon method, and the science of education generally; and no sooner will such knowledge be acquired that it will be reduced to practice in the school-room, under the superintendence of the principal master.<sup>19</sup>

In answering the charge, levelled by some, that the course of study laid down - as opposed to practical experience of teaching - was to an extent both 'superfluous and excessive', Head Inspector Fleming, in his 1862 report on Londonderry District Model School, stoutly defended the programme followed if the twofold object of ensuring competence in 'improved' methods of instruction, and of enhancing the status of the teacher was to be realised. He stressed the importance of

[bearing] in mind that for every branch of knowledge a new method of instruction has been adopted in the elementary school, and that the surest way of disseminating these methods is that of imparting them to the future teachers, so as to enable them to enter upon their career with a certain amount of professional skill, which, while it aids in lightening and otherwise alleviating the labours, will, at the same time, raise the teacher in public estimation, and cause his office to be honoured and respected.

Besides, he warned - implying the prevalence of a particular shortcoming among those untrained practising teachers - he who knows no more of his subject than that which he has to teach will always be a 'bad teacher'.<sup>20</sup>

### ***9.3 The Course of Study***

In the district model schools, the course of study for pupil teachers consisted of instruction in examination subjects, periods of individual study, and the preparation of class lessons. The emphasis was very much on the area first mentioned, with English and Mathematics as the core subjects. The former was subdivided into reading, composition, grammar, parsing, and derivation, while the latter typically covered arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and the cognate topics of book-keeping, mensuration, and surveying. Other examination subjects were geography, history, natural history, reasoning, and money matters. In the district model schools with farms attached,

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<sup>18</sup>C.N.E.I., *Nineteenth report ... 1852*, App. H, p. 174.

<sup>19</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fourth report ... 1857*, App. A, p. 91.

<sup>20</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-ninth report ... 1862*, App. B, p. 104.

instruction in agriculture was also included. A close familiarity with the Board's Third, Fourth, and Fifth 'Lesson Books' was an absolute requirement as examination questions tended to be tailored to their content.<sup>21</sup> Books bearing on teaching method, in use in Newry District Model School, were Dawes' *Suggestive Hints on Secular Instruction*, and Sullivan's *Lectures on Popular Education*.

Time-tabling of lessons was not standardised and was a matter for the headmaster of each school. Therefore, differences as to order, though not as to emphasis, are found in the arrangements for the individual schools. The morning course for pupil teachers in the Clonmel school and that for evening study in Newry, in 1854 and 1849 respectively, are fairly representative of what was attempted. The morning course in Clonmel was taught by the assistant, and ran from 6 a.m. to 7.30 a.m. On Mondays, arithmetic and algebra were taught; Tuesdays - geometry and trigonometry; Wednesdays - book-keeping; Thursdays - mensuration; practical geometry, mapping; Fridays - mental arithmetic and algebra; Saturdays - geometry and trigonometry. The evening course, from 6 to 9 p.m. was taught by the headmaster. The timetable for Newry District Model School gives a more detailed breakdown of the course content. This is due, in part, to the fact that the study period - 5.30 p.m. to 8.45 p.m. - was more than twice the length of the morning study period at Clonmel.

*Monday* - Arithmetic or Geometry; History; Writing Exercise; Book-keeping; Spelling-book Superseded; Affixes, Prefixes, Derivation.

*Tuesday* - Arithmetic or Geometry; Mensuration; Algebra; Writing Extracts; Parsing.

*Thursday* - Reasoning; Money Matters; Natural Philosophy; Book-keeping; Mental Arithmetic; Natural History.

*Friday* - Arithmetic or Geometry; History; Algebra; Writing from Dictation; Affixes; Prefixes, Derivations.

*Saturday* - Reasoning; Mensuration; Natural Philosophy; Writing a short essay; Spelling-book Superseded; Parsing.

On Wednesday evenings there was no 'fixed study'. When the weather was favourable, the pupil teachers '[walked] out with the master, and [practised] surveying with the chain'. This discretionary time on Wednesdays was standard in the different district model schools. While there was study on Saturday evenings, during the afternoon the pupil teachers were 'at liberty to visit their friends, or to see their clergymen'.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>This list is compiled from the reports on Bailieborough District Model School in 1849, (C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, Appendix, p. 302), and Trim District Model School in 1853, (C.N.E.I., *Twentieth report ... 1853*, App. G, p. 53).

<sup>22</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, Appendix, p. 200; C.N.E.I., *Twenty-first report ... 1854*, App. G, p. 114.

The strong impression given is that there was an imbalance between the time given over to preparation for examination, which would decide classification, and instruction in teaching theory and method. On a practical level, only in the Clonmel school was time specifically set apart for lesson preparation, according to the time-table. Each morning instruction was given in 'Heads of Lesson'. One assumes that this involved preparation for the upcoming school day. At that, it was allotted a bare fifteen minutes on the 'Course of Study' timetable in 1849. By 1854, it no longer featured.<sup>23</sup> For Londonderry District Model School, Fleming's report for 1862 suggested that time allowed for 'private study' during the school day was intended to be used by the pupil teachers and paid monitresses 'to enable them to prepare for the office of teacher...'.<sup>24</sup> In the case of Newry and Trim District Model Schools only, is there clear and explicit evidence that pupil teachers received 'instruction beforehand' from the headmaster 'in the subject-matter of the lessons for each day'.<sup>25</sup>

Study for monitresses, as they did not reside in the establishments, was confined to periods immediately before and after school, and it was shorter as a result. However, monitresses were expected to devote further time to individual study outside, in their own homes or lodgings. In Belfast District Model School, Keenan reported that the monitresses assembled each morning at 8.30. Between then and half-past nine, various lessons were prepared for home study, while the previous night's work was corrected. In the hour after school the monitresses received instruction in vocal and instrumental music, drawing, grammar, and natural history. Though not specifically stated, it can safely be assumed that at least some of this instruction had to do with lesson preparation as it is unclear whether the daily periods during school time, and ranging in duration from thirty to forty minutes 'set apart for their own special instruction', refer to preparation for examination or teaching.<sup>26</sup> An earlier report for Newry (1849) is similarly uninformative on this point. Monitresses were required to be present at 9.15 a.m. each school day, but no account is given of how the time between then and the commencement of school at 10 a.m. was occupied. For one and a half hours after school, on four days of the week, they received 'special instruction' from the mistresses who undertook this duty on alternate weeks. Neither course nor content is specified.<sup>27</sup> The report for Trim District Model School, in 1851, adds some welcome detail. There, too, the four monitresses attended at 9.15 a.m. and were each assigned separate duties. One, under the supervision of the teacher, gave a lesson on a pre-arranged topic to those children who assembled early. Another was involved in the arrangement of various

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp 280 and 114 respectively.

<sup>24</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-ninth report ... 1862*, App B, p. 104.

<sup>25</sup>Newry District Model School - C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, Appendix, p. 192. Trim District Model School - C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, App. B, p. 92.

<sup>26</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fourth report ... 1857*, App. A, p. 68.

<sup>27</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, Appendix, p. 196.

materials that would be used during the day - 'copy books, pens and inkstands'. A third inspected the children, as they arrived, for personal cleanliness, while the fourth was 'engaged in the Infants' school'. These different duties were taken in rotation. In the hour after school they received instruction in various subjects, but again with no obvious distinction between lessons aimed at self-improvement, and practical preparation for teaching:

*Monday* - Writing from copy - lines, and exercises in punctuation, principles of orthography, using *Spelling Book Superseded* as text book.

*Tuesday* - Writing from dictation, and exercises in orthography.

*Wednesday* - Grammar; they are required to prepare lessons from a text book, and parse, orally and in writing, sentences selected by the teacher.

*Thursday* - Arithmetic.

*Friday* - Reading, explanation of lessons.

*Saturday* - Geography and reading.

Although allotted no specific day, one hour weekly was also devoted to making the monitresses 'thoroughly acquainted with the various kinds of needlework'.<sup>28</sup> The time allowed for the instruction of monitresses was, as Edward Butler admitted, in his report on Galway District Model School in 1852, very limited, and '[afforded] but small facilities for effecting any marked improvement in the attainments of such young persons'. Yet, he regarded the progress made as satisfactory, both with respect to 'acquirements and method of teaching'.<sup>29</sup>

The programme of study for monitresses, while very similar to that for the pupil teachers in most areas, differed significantly in the general area of mathematics. Apart from arithmetic, no other areas of the subject appear to have been taught. Moreover, lessons on 'reasoning' and 'money matters', where taught, were not accorded the same importance as they were on the course of study for males.<sup>30</sup> This difference of emphasis is curious. It is not tenable to suggest that it was simply a matter of time. If anything, these were the areas in which the teacher's role in perpetuating social values was most clearly addressed. The attitude of the National Board of Education in this regard can serve only to underline the inferior role and limited expectations accorded women by all agents of authority - social, political and religious. Even where they were charged with the responsibility of moulding the youth, it was not envisaged that their female pupils would question male domination or the existing social order.

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<sup>28</sup>C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, App. B, p. 107.

<sup>29</sup>C.N.E.I., *Nineteenth report ... 1852*, App. H, p. 205.

<sup>30</sup>For a listing of subjects in Coleraine(1851) and Clonmel(1854), see C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, App. B, p. 129; C.N.E.I., *Twenty-first report ... 1854*, App. G, p. 115.

As the daily operation of the system fell into a familiar pattern, the annual accounts of the operation of the model schools became more predictable, and less revealing of the inspectors' personal opinions as to the manner and effectiveness of their operation. The almost casual assurance that the programme, as laid down, was being followed, was acceptable to the Board, and comment rarely rose above the banal, as can be illustrated by the observation of Head Inspector Andrew O'Callaghan for Newry District Model School, in 1867:

Special attention has been given to their[junior staff] training, with useful results. They have been instructed in the general principles of the science of teaching, and exhibit in the management of their classes a considerable amount of tact and judgement.<sup>31</sup>

From the detail provided, it is evident that instruction, outside of school hours, in the 'science' of teaching and help in the preparation of lessons formed but a small part of the 'course of study'. It is an unavoidable conclusion that observation and emulation, under careful supervision, formed the two principal bases on which the 'skill' of teaching was acquired. This is not surprising given the conviction that mastery of a trade was best acquired through 'on the job' training. It did little though to counter the perception that teaching was but a trade. Considering the poor remuneration and the lack of any internal control over entry, it is not surprising that teaching was not uncommonly viewed as inferior in standing to many manual occupations.

#### ***9.4 The Ideological Message***

Archbishop Richard Whately was the commissioner primarily responsible for directing the Board's attitude in matters of ideology, and in promoting its viewpoint through the content of the school lesson books. Before his translation to Dublin, he was Drummond Professor of Political Economy at Oxford. In 1831, he argued for the need to educate children on the 'important truths belonging to the science[of Political Economy]'. These he believed could be easily reduced 'to the capacity of the child'. So important was a knowledge of this science that even those of the 'lower orders' could not be safely left ignorant of its principles. Whately voiced the fears of his class that the ordinary people would be led astray by demagogues who advocated the redistribution of wealth which 'would put an end to poverty for ever'.<sup>32</sup> An acceptance by him that political power would no longer be the total preserve of an elite, made it all the more pressing that every means of instructing the politically inexperienced be availed of in order to maintain

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<sup>31</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-fourth report ... 1867*, App. B, p. 113.

<sup>32</sup>Richard Whately, *Introductory lectures on political economy delivered in the Easter Term, MDCCCXXI*, (2nd ed., London, 1832), p.202. See also J.M. Goldstrom, 'Richard Whately and political economy in school books, 1833-80', *Irish Historical Studies* xv, No. 58, (September 1966), pp 131-146, and Goldstrom, *The social context of education*, especially pp 71-6.

social stability. Using a maritime analogy, Whately declared it 'preposterous to reckon a man fit to take a part in the management of a ship, and yet unfit to learn anything of navigation'.<sup>33</sup>

The Board's *Fourth Book of Lessons* in particular sought to shape the thinking of both the candidate teacher and the senior child in national schools. Of the 340 pages in the 1853 edition sixty-seven were given over to political economy. Of these, Whately was responsible for thirty-eight.<sup>34</sup> This section, titled *Political Economy and Useful Arts*, covered topics such as 'Lessons on Value', 'Wages', 'Rich and Poor', 'On Capital', 'On Taxes', 'Letting and Hiring', and 'Division of Labour'.<sup>35</sup>

In dealing with the question of why some occupations attracted considerably higher wages than others the writer went to some lengths, in simple form, to bring the reader to the 'truth' that the level of supply determined the value which would be put on any job. Thus the expense involved in educating for certain jobs, according to Whately,

causes fewer people to become surgeons. It causes the supply of surgeons to become more *limited*; that is, confined to a few; and it is this limitation that is the cause of their being better paid.<sup>36</sup>

The alternative point of view that cost prevented the majority from aspiring to more lucrative occupations requiring extensive schooling did not occur to those whose attitude was rooted in *laissez-faire* doctrines. The lesson assured the reader that, as the system worked, there was no compulsion involved. Both buyer and seller, labourer and employer, were free to negotiate - 'the one, to ask whatever price he may think fit; the other, to offer what he thinks the article worth'. The lesson also contained the warning to the labourer of the need to display prudence in the manner in which he used his wages. Stress was placed on careful management and provision against hard times. Those labourers who were apt to blame others, it was suggested, 'ought rather to blame their own imprudence'.<sup>37</sup>

On the question of an equitable redistribution of wealth, the reader, in an age before the co-operative principle had been enunciated, was assured that under such a system the poor would then be in an even worse position with the lack of capital preventing the establishment of large commercial ventures, particularly where there was necessarily a significant delay between the initial investment and first return. This would result in a

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<sup>33</sup>Whately, *Introductory lectures*, p. 203.

<sup>34</sup>Goldstrom, *The social context of education*, p. 135.

<sup>35</sup>*Fourth Book of Lessons for the use of schools*, (Published by the direction of the Commissioners of National Education, Dublin, 1842).

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 223.



'hand to mouth existence' for the majority, with the unfortunate who happened to accumulate capital being 'in danger of having his property taken away and divided...'.<sup>38</sup> The few who lived by the return from their property and did not have to subsist by their labour were regarded as indispensable to stable society. In countries where such a class did not exist, the plight of the poor was even more desperate with no hope of a future amelioration of their condition. The message for the young reader was clear - only through security of property and the propertied class could the diligent poor aspire to an improvement in conditions. Through application to learning and the adoption of conforming mores the young might improve their station:

... in any country, in which property is secure, and the people industrious, the wealth of that country will increase; and those who are the most industrious and frugal will gain more than such as are idle and extravagant, and will lay by something for their children, who will thus be born to a good property.

Young people who make good use of their time, are quick at learning, and grow up industrious and steady, may, perhaps, be able to earn more than enough for their support, and so have the satisfaction of leaving some property to their children; and if they, again, should, instead of spending this property, increase it by honest diligence, prudence and frugality, they may, in time, raise themselves to wealth...<sup>39</sup>

Since the Board published most of the text books used in National schools, and any other books required its explicit sanction, the commissioners' books were to be found throughout the school network. (Indeed, they were also to be found in schools throughout the English-speaking world). In 1851, of the 400,000 reading books either sold or distributed free, approximately 50,000 were readers for the senior classes - books III, IV, and V. It was in these that Whately's economic principles were most forcefully articulated, and, according to Goldstrom, accepted and welcomed by those of influence in all denominations:

The inclusion of political economy in the Irish books had one happy result for the commissioners. Year after year the books were criticised for sectarian bias by catholics and protestants but no voice in this wearisome controversy was raised against Whately's writings: everything else might be suspect but the 'laws' of political economy were self-evident to all.<sup>40</sup>

The widespread availability, acceptance, and use of these lessons does not, however, imply an impact and influence in similar proportions on either the pupil or the instructor. An assessment in this area is problematic. Other more powerful influences were at work. Political reform, involving a broadening of suffrage, led to a marked increase in the emergence of alternative perspectives. In time, the policies of wider political inclusion would overshadow the softer liberal but rigid hierarchical structures

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 225.

<sup>40</sup>Goldstrom, *The social context of education*, p. 136.

of those of Whately's school of thought. In Ireland the locus of political representation for Roman Catholics shifted from the 'paternalist' interest of the gentry to the complementary, and at times competing, forces of the politicised masses and their spiritual mentors. The well-established association of the Roman Catholic clergy with the patronage and management of national schools suggested that, as the church became more organised and disciplined, the hierarchy's claim to an over-riding interest in all matters educational would be conceded. As the 'dominant *elite*' in this area, its interests merged with those of the traditional 'political economists'. As church control increased and the distinction between repression and respect became blurred, the moral lessons of the school reader became part of an armoury assembled to protect and promote its hegemonic interest. Where church influence was less pervasive, one must wonder as to the impact of these lessons. It may be, as with Goldstrom's view of its impact on the working classes of England, that it was, if anything, subliminal:

How much of Whately's work was simplified and passed on from teacher to pupil? How much was remembered and accepted without being understood? To what extent was the acceptance of the social order by the English working man due what he had learned at school? Historians have commented that many workmen in the latter part of the nineteenth century believed in the concepts of Victorian liberalism. How far can this be attributed to school children having absorbed a little of their *Easy lessons*?<sup>41</sup>

### **9.5 Practical Preparation**

As with the programme of study for junior staff adopted in each model school, accounts of the 'training' of candidate teachers, the level of inspectorial supervision, and comment on the overall efficiency of the scheme are uneven. The more detailed expositions tend to be found in the earlier annual *Reports*. In this regard the fullest account of the practical arrangements for teaching are available in the 1849 report on Clonmel District Model School. Two hours each morning and three in the evening were devoted by the pupil teachers to receiving instruction from the headmaster, 'or in preparing the lessons they are to give the pupils next day'. During the school day, stated to be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.,

they are occupied with the duties of the school, each being charged with the instruction of a class or of a division. All the subjects taught in a class are communicated by the pupil-teacher; the Head Master not only superintends the entire school, but also either instructs or examines in each class and division from time to time, and thus sets an example to the pupil teachers of the method of imparting instruction, and of ascertaining the proficiency of the pupils. The pupil teachers are thus made to change from class to class every quarter, or thereabouts, so that in the year each has charge of every class and of every subject from the lowest to the highest.

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 146.

J. W. Kavanagh who wrote these words, explained to the commissioners that there was a ratio of about sixteen pupils to each pupil teacher, allowing the supersession of the monitorial system of instruction, and availing of it 'merely to enable the pupil, and candidate teachers, to see how, and to what extent, it may safely be resorted to in ordinary schools where a numerous attendance makes its use a matter of necessity'. Pupil teachers, initially, took charge of small divisions within the junior classes, and graduated to larger divisions within senior classes. As to the comprehensive nature of the training 'discipline, school accounts, classification and promotion of pupils, every requisite practical point connected with the management of a school is entered on by them during their course', averred Kavanagh.<sup>42</sup> Arrangements in Trim District Model School differed only in the length of time each pupil teacher remained with a particular class - in this case a month. Again, the role of the headmaster was primarily one of supervisor, with incidental teaching duties 'as often as practicable'.<sup>43</sup>

Not remarked on in either the Clonmel or Trim reports, most probably because it had not as yet been introduced, was the 'Gallery Lesson'. It was used as a means of teaching arithmetic, geography and natural history to class groups in Newry District Model School in 1849. Edward Butler's inspection confirmed that the lessons were 'always prepared beforehand, and the heads written down'. Furthermore, he was confident that as the teachers and junior staff better understood the method these lessons would 'recommend themselves more and more by their results'.<sup>44</sup>

W.H. Newell's account of the daily routine of the paid monitresses in Trim District Model School, for 1851, is the most detailed for either class of candidate teacher. In this case, at least, it appears that the teaching by monitresses was confined to the infant and junior classes. Considering that they were recruited from the age of fourteen years, and many were no older than some senior pupils, this is not surprising. Of interest on this very point was the provision for training in Galway District Model School at a much later period. James Patterson, in an unusually detailed comment in 1869, reported that all junior staff '[had] daily practice in teaching *junior* classes ... and the opportunity of observing the method pursued by the principal teachers in instructing the *senior* classes'.<sup>45</sup> There is nothing to suggest that this was standard practice at the time. As noted earlier, the four paid monitresses at the Trim school were allocated specific duties for the period immediately before the official commencement of the school day, and a rotation system operated which ensured that each in turn would experience the various

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<sup>42</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, Appendix, p. 270.

<sup>43</sup>C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, App. B, p. 92.

<sup>44</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, Appendix, p. 192.

<sup>45</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-sixth report ... 1869*, App. B, p. 110. [Italics mine].

tasks. This system was maintained during school hours. For convenience sake, the paid monitresses are denominated by the letters A, B, C, & D, in the published table:<sup>46</sup>

10.00 - 12.00	A. takes charge of pupils in Sequel to Second Book of Lessons, instructing them in the several branches they learn, according to the arrangement specified in 'Time Table' of school. B. Similarly occupied with pupils in Second Book of Lessons. C. Engaged in teaching pupils in First Book of Lessons. D. in Infants' school.
12.00 - 12.30	All in playground with children, where they exercise a proper superintendence over the words and actions of the latter.
12.30 - 1.30	A., B., and C., give instructions in needlework as head mistress may direct.
1.30 - 2.30	A., B., and C., teach the easier parts of arithmetic and the formation of figures to the younger pupils.
2.30 - 3.00	Each monitress gives religious instruction in the department assigned to her.

While the day-to-day supervision of the junior staff devolved to the heads of departments, it was subject to regular monitoring by the district inspectors, with the head teachers being held accountable for proficiency. While the close level of involvement by inspectors is frequently referred to in the early reports, there is no evidence to suggest that practice changed over time. In Ballymena District Model School this was reported as occurring weekly, with pupil teaches and monitresses examined separately on alternate visits. To William M'Creedy, this level of superintendence made it impossible that negligence on the part of either the teachers or junior staff would remain undetected for long, 'and equally impossible that after detection it can remain long uncorrected'. The head inspector declared, with obvious satisfaction, in 1851, that the 'anxious and willing students' and their 'able and zealous instructors' had not made it necessary to have resort either to 'rebuke or remonstrance' during the year.<sup>47</sup> Remarks of a similar nature were made with respect to the junior staffs in Coleraine and Dunmanway. While in 1849, W. H. Newell informed the commissioners that he examined the junior staff of Trim District Model School 'frequently, sometimes twice a week', and had noted a marked improvement 'in their answering'.<sup>48</sup>

As a means of documenting the lessons taught and monitoring the progress made, a number of inspectors required individual members of the junior staff to keep detailed written records bearing on their training. The report for Bailieborough District Model

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<sup>46</sup>C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, App. B, p. 107.

<sup>47</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, Appendix, p. 229.

<sup>48</sup>C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, App. B, pp 108, 124 and 156.

School for 1852 provides the most detailed account of the thinking behind this requirement, and the manner in which it was to be carried into effect. In this case, it would also seem that it applied equally to trained teachers in the establishment. The fact that the role of head teacher was seen as supervisory lends credence to the view that the compiling of weekly lessons and progress reports was a matter for the individual members of the junior staff. This 'faithful and minute record' conferred on the inspectors the opportunity of examining 'how *any* class, at *any* period, may have been employed'. Furthermore, they believed that it allowed each person 'whether pupil or teacher' the opportunity of judging his own performance and tailoring his efforts to his ability. On this last point, the inspectors suggested that junior staff, due to inexperience attempted too much. Overall, they were satisfied with its '*practical* utility', and were convinced of its absolute worth in raising the standard of teaching:

Our young teachers, trained in such habits during their apprenticeship, must necessarily carry to the schools to which they may be appointed, fixed habits and principles in regulating the arrangement of school-time and subjects to be taught, which cannot fail to make successful schools.<sup>49</sup>

A somewhat similar arrangement obtained in Newry District Model School where a 'Record Book' was kept 'to note the answering of each pupil on each subject daily'. This record was available for inspection by both the headmaster and the district inspector, 'who can, from it, form an accurate opinion of the skill and carefulness of the pupil teachers'.<sup>50</sup> Of possible significance here, in the absence of specific reference to 'Record Books' in other reports, is the fact that, at this time, the Bailieborough and Newry schools both had the same head inspector, James Patten. Failure to mention this type of monitoring by his colleagues does not necessarily mean that it was not employed, rather that it was not believed to be deserving of emphasis. P. J. Keenan's later report on Belfast District Model School, while it did not distinctly mention record keeping of this sort, referred to his inspection of the pupil teachers' written exercises 'on the principles of method, on the science of education, and on schoolmastership ...'.<sup>51</sup> Even in the absence of a more universal mention of pupil teachers maintaining documentary records of their progress, it is reasonable to infer that written accounts were kept for regular inspection. This requirement for self-evaluation by candidate teachers was a common feature of training under the Lancastrian system.

### **9.6 Examination**

As already noted, the inspectorate quickly became aware that many of the candidates presenting themselves for selection as pupil teachers were inadequately prepared for the

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<sup>49</sup>C.N.E.I., *Nineteenth report ... 1852*, App. H, p. 173.

<sup>50</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twentieth report ... 1853*, App. G, p. 82.

<sup>51</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fourth report ... 1857*, App. A, p. 68.

proposed course. This problem, it was believed, could be satisfactorily addressed only through the doubling of the term of the course - from one to two years. The Board gave its qualified assent to the repeated requests of the inspectorate on this matter in 1855. Edward Butler's concern about the little progress made by the pupil teachers in Newry District Model School in 1849 was lessened somewhat by his own conviction that if they had a thorough knowledge of the various aspects of the programme it would suffice as a stop-gap measure, since they must at any event possess 'sufficient qualifications to *commence* their duties as elementary teachers'.<sup>52</sup>

This report also contains the first evidence of the content of the pupil teachers' written examination held after the initial six months.<sup>53</sup> It was by any measure comprehensive in extent. Held over ten evenings and lasting sixteen and a half hours in total, it was intensely searching in nature. Sample lessons for Fourth Class in grammar, arithmetic, geography and the 'Lesson Books' were to be drawn up. The English paper consisted of questions on poetry, parsing, sentence composition, etymology, grammar, and derivations. The history paper contained questions on ancient, medieval, and modern periods. Natural history was concerned with matters vegetable and animal. Geography was particularly extensive, posing questions on celestial and solar systems, the seasons, climates, principal physical features and political divisions. The book-keeping paper required a facility with what would be now termed a 'cash analysis system'. Mathematics, in three separated papers, covered arithmetic, geometry and mensuration, and algebra. Many of the questions on this last subject area required an exceptionally high level of computational skills, as is clear from the question: 'What fraction of a perch is  $\frac{5}{7}$  of an inch?'

Given the emphasis placed by the Board on the need for teachers to act as agents of social control, the test paper on 'Lessons on Money Matters' is of more than passing interest. While it demanded a detailed knowledge of the topic selected, the structure of the question patently encouraged a mere regurgitation of the lesson titled 'On Wages'.

Write out the substance of the lesson on 'Rich and Poor'. The following are the leading points to be developed:-

- Characteristic distinction between these two classes of society
- Two causes from which this distinction arises
- In what security of property consists
- Injurious effects of laws that would, with regard to amount of property, place all persons, and oblige them to remain, upon the same footing
- Advantages resulting to all the inhabitants of a country from security of property
- The rich cannot but benefit the country

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<sup>52</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, Appendix, p. 201. [Italics mine].

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, pp 218-226.

- The Apostles did not intend that the distinction between rich and poor should be abolished among Christians
- Practical lesson from seeing that all persons do not make a right use of their wealth

Pupil teachers were also tested orally on most of the above subjects as well as in their knowledge of spelling, reasoning, and mechanics. Written papers on religion were prepared by the respective clergymen. It was the responsibility of the inspectors to set the examinations for the different model schools. The lack of a centralised testing system, while it denied the opportunity of comparative analysis, had the advantage of permitting an inspector to take account of the ability of junior staff in individual model schools.

A notable feature of the set examinations was the minor role accorded competency in teaching; one paper only required candidate teachers to sketch out 'Heads of Lessons'. The mid-term examination for pupil teachers training at the Trim school also had but one paper on this area - this time on 'School Management'. This reinforces the earlier observation that instruction outside of class was predominantly given over to furthering the pupil teachers' academic standards, with 'teacher training' being, apart from individual time given to the study of method, confined to pupil-contact hours. However, the listing of subjects in which paid monitresses were examined in both the Trim and Newry schools suggests that a definitive verdict on this matter would be unwise. 'Method of Teaching' figured in the examinations for both, but the absence of a written paper on this topic suggests the assessment was either *viva voce* or on the basis of written notes and actual performance in the classroom situation. In Trim, the subjects of the written papers were 'grammar', 'arithmetic', 'Lesson Books', and 'geography'. Besides 'method of teaching', other subjects examined orally were reading, spelling and writing from dictation.<sup>54</sup> All junior staff in Coleraine District Model School were examined in 'method of teaching'. Written papers were not included with the report, but tabulated results were provided. The format of the presentation suggests that the assessment was not by written examination.<sup>55</sup>

Reference is made in the 1860 report for Bailieborough District Model School to junior staff sitting the district examination for 'probationers' as part of their course.<sup>56</sup> This examination had both oral and written components, but the programme gives no indication that there was any formal evaluation of competency to teach. Candidates were tested in reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, grammar and geography as dealt with in certain of the Board's publications. Female candidates were not required to be familiar

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<sup>54</sup>C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, App. B, pp 109-111.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, pp 128-9.

<sup>56</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-seventh report ... 1860*, App. C, p. 128.

with the sections on 'commercial arithmetic'.<sup>57</sup> This formed the basic level of entry into teaching. While it was expected that the candidates would come through the course for paid monitors in ordinary national schools, this was not invariably the case. At the completion of a year's probationary period, the teacher was expected to take the examination for classification as a teacher of Third Class, and for those of exceptional ability for recognition as a teacher of Second Class. Junior staff, having successfully completed their programme in the model schools, were regarded as having at least the basic acquirements of a recognised teacher of Third Class, 'if deemed so qualified by the head inspector'.<sup>58</sup> The requirements for this examination are indicative of the level of competency expected of the candidate teacher graduating from the model schools. Again, the examination was both oral and written, and candidates were assessed on teaching theory rather than practice. As with the 'in-house' papers, female candidates were not tested on the full range of subjects, and not to same extent as males in some others. The standards set were as follows, with males taking all subjects and females exempted from those denoted by an asterisk:

**Reading** - To read with ease and expression; and be familiar with the principles of reading, and with the principles and difficulties of pronunciation.

**Spelling** - To write from dictation, in a neat, free hand, with correct spelling and punctuation, any passage read from the 'National Lesson Books'.

**Arithmetic** - To know, in addition to the rules mentioned in the course for Probationers [elementary rules and proportions], fractions, involution, evolution, and to be acquainted with the rules of mental arithmetic. Female teachers will not be required to proceed beyond Practice to qualify for this Class.

**Grammar** - To parse any sentence submitted to them, and to analyse the words, giving the roots, prefixes and affixes. Females will not be examined to the same extent in the latter exercise.

**Geography** - To know the elements of mathematical and physical geography, the geography of Ireland, and the general geography of Europe.

**\*Book-keeping** - To be acquainted with the principles of Book-keeping, and the mode of keeping farm accounts.

**\*Mensuration** - To be acquainted with the measurement of plane surfaces.

**Art of Teaching** - To be familiar with the improved modes of teaching, and the 'Rules and Regulations' of the commissioners.

**To be prepared for examination on the subjects treated of in -**

The National Lesson Books, to the Fourth, inclusive.

Easy Lessons on Money Matters.

Introduction to the Art of Reading, 1st Part.

Spelling Book Superseded.

Geography Generalised, first eight chapters.

\*Board's Treatise on Book-keeping.

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<sup>57</sup>*Lords' Inquiry ... 1854*, App. D, p. 1347.

<sup>58</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-first report ... 1864*, App. A, 'Rules on Teachers - Classification of Teachers', p. 375.



\*Board's Mensuration, sections 2 and 7.

Outline of the Methods of Teaching.

\*Whatever Agricultural Class Book may be hereafter published or sanctioned by the Board for the use of their schools.<sup>59</sup>

### ***9.7 Effectiveness of Training***

As already observed, while all followed the same programme, tests were not set centrally; they were a collaborative effort on the part of the district inspector and the head inspector of each circuit. Therefore, even where tabulated results were given for individual model schools - and this practice was not universal - a comparative analysis is not necessarily revealing. More reliable indicators of the efficiency of different institutions are contained within the published inspectorial reports which can be amplified by reference to the Board's internal records. On the numerous occasions, especially in the later reports, when no reference was made to the efficiency of the establishments as training institutes, it is reasonable to conclude that the inspectors were satisfied with progress.

With regard to the published reports, it must be stated that inspectors sought to give an accurate account, and, while happy to lavish praise on the application and progress of teachers and junior staff, did not shy away from pointing up deficiencies. At times, though, particularly where members of the teaching staff were concerned, they did lack in candidness. Concerns in this area are normally to be found in the non-published records. Regulations regarding appointments and training, published in 1854, required three inspections of each model school per term. These were to be 'serious and searching in character'. A requirement that 'weekly returns' from the teachers be collected each Saturday, along with reports from some individual inspectors, indicate a more frequent regime of inspection.<sup>60</sup>

Of the original six district model schools, the reports on the efficiency of the training provided in Newry and Trim are the most detailed and revealing, and allow a qualified appraisal of their performance. These are revealing of the sometimes rapidly changing effectiveness of the schools. In the case of Newry, the inspector distinguished, in 1849, between the efficiency of the pupil teachers and the paid monitresses. The latter group, on account of the younger age at which they were selected, tended to be of a lower standard. Being 'generally attentive and pains-taking', he found that they had made 'tolerable progress in the course of study laid down for them'.<sup>61</sup> The report for 1854, while referring to the 'success and steadiness' of the pupil teachers, did not advert unfavourably to the accomplishments of paid monitresses. On the contrary, it was of the

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<sup>59</sup> *Lords' Inquiry ... 1854*, App. D, p. 1347.

<sup>60</sup> C.N.E.I., *Twenty-first report ... 1854*, App. D, p. 153.

<sup>61</sup> C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, Appendix, p. 196.

view that all junior staff were 'prepared to enter creditably on the duties of school-keeping'.<sup>62</sup> Later, in 1856, there was unqualified praise for all members of the junior staff who had performed their 'several duties with care punctuality, and attention', and, in the inspector's estimation, were fully prepared 'for that profession in which they are to earn for themselves respect, and honourable livelihood'.<sup>63</sup> Head Inspector W.A. Hunter, who reported in 1858, found the opposite to what his colleague, Edward Butler, had noted in 1849. It was his stated belief that not only in Newry, but, in general, the pupil teacher system '[had] not ... been productive of all the good results that were anticipated from it'. By contrast, he found the system of paid monitorships to have been 'highly satisfactory'. He based these opinions on his findings regarding application and cost. The pupil teacher system he regarded as too expensive and the pupil teachers 'sometimes inefficient'. Paid monitresses cost less, required less supervision, were 'generally very efficient', and went on to become 'successful and active' teachers.<sup>64</sup> However, his conclusions on this score were not enduring. In his very next annual report, Hunter noted the 'attention' to studies, 'care' in discharge of duties by the junior staff, and the 'satisfaction' given by those who had graduated.<sup>65</sup> Subsequent reports were similarly upbeat. The next comment of note was made some eight years later. At this stage, all junior staff again merited a favourable report, not alone with regard to their studies and general conduct, but also, reflecting favourably on their teachers, to their technical training.<sup>66</sup> In the 1858 report, almost as if in passing, reference was made to the necessity of removing the headmaster. It is only in the internal records of the Board that one becomes aware of the unsettling effect the controversy surrounding this course of action had on the entire establishment.<sup>67</sup> Considering that his replacement proved no more efficient, the unfavourable comments of the head inspector were probably mis-directed.<sup>68</sup> There was further disruption during the 1860s. John Browne, the third headmaster in three years, resigned his post in 1863, having been successful in a public examination for the post of sub-inspector. The interval between his departure and his replacement by the headmaster at Bailieborough, McCullough, permitted a slippage in standards. Both the head and district inspectors welcomed the appointment, assuring the commissioners that 'no better selection could have been made', and commended the fact that since M'Cullough took charge there had been a marked improvement all round, with the conduct of the junior staff described as 'highly satisfactory'.<sup>69</sup> However, by 1868 the school was again reported as being in a

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<sup>62</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twentieth report ... 1853*, App. G, p. 82.

<sup>63</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-third report ... 1856*, App. B, p. 91.

<sup>64</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fifth report ... 1858*, App. B, p. 44.

<sup>65</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-sixth report ... 1859*, App. B, p. 62.

<sup>66</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-fourth report ... 1867*, App. B, p. 113.

<sup>67</sup>See Chapter VIII, p. 184.

<sup>68</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 20 Aug., 10 Sept., 25 Oct., 10 Dec. 1858, 7 Jan. 1859, 9 Apr., 10 May, 7 June 1861.

<sup>69</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-first report ... 1864*, App. B, pp 50 and 52.

highly inefficient state, and, following representations from the inspectors, the headmaster was removed. This was speedily followed by the resignation of the male assistant, who was regarded 'to have been equally culpable'. Under their replacements, the school 'rapidly recover[ed]'.<sup>70</sup>

W.H. Newell, like his colleagues at Newry, made no attempt to hide what he regarded as deficiencies in the training of the junior staff at the Trim school. He complained, in 1851, of the 'want of a concise and accurate mode of expression' in their written examinations, which he attributed, not to lack of effort, but to 'a common defect ... of persons of their class ... particularly difficult to remedy'. The headmaster's attention was also drawn to a similar lack of facility in the oral presentation of lessons, and his efforts to address this were seen to be successful. It would appear that the inspector was attempting to wean pupil teachers away from the directive, under the monitorial system, of adhering rigidly to its method and the content of the printed material sanctioned. Newell was concerned that

every teacher who aspires to a respectable position in his art should be able to excite the attention, and instruct the minds of his pupils by occasional 'Conversational Lectures'; besides they relieve what may be termed the monotony of ordinary school business.<sup>71</sup>

He expressed concerns similar to those of Butler in relation to paid monitresses. Starting from a low base, he found that to achieve even their present state of proficiency 'required no inconsiderable amount of industry'. However, despite this, he assured the commissioners that their strong desire to succeed encouraged all to hope that they would 'yet [be] respectably classed as teachers under the National Board'. The staff of female teachers was also praised for their earnestness in endeavouring to help them to achieve this.<sup>72</sup> In 1852, the staff of pupil teachers was complimented by Edward Butler on their application to teaching and study, and 'their docility out of school hours'.<sup>73</sup> However, in the following year, concern with what would now be termed 'curriculum over-load', prompted the same inspector to re-evaluate the situation. As he saw it, pupil teachers, 'quite inexperienced in the art of teaching, imperfectly, if at all, acquainted with several of the subjects of instruction', required such continuous monitoring from the headmaster that he was unable to give 'to any class its due share of attention'. As regards conduct, that of the pupil teachers was recorded as 'generally good', with the exception of one violation of discipline during the year that elicited a reprimand and a caution. Of the paid monitresses, the district inspector reported 'in most favourable terms, as to [their]

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<sup>70</sup> C.N.E.I., *Thirty-sixth report ... 1869*, p. 167.

<sup>71</sup> C.N.E.I., *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, App. B, p. 97.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>73</sup> C.N.E.I., *Nineteenth report ... 1852*, App. H, p. 218.

zeal and efficiency'.<sup>74</sup> The report for 1860, while still positive, urged attention in certain areas. Conduct was described as exemplary. It was in the area of teacher training that deficiencies came to light. In the instruction of the pupil teachers it was suggested that the devotion of a disproportionate amount of attention to 'natural philosophy and other advanced subjects' led to a neglect of 'the elementary and more important branches' of grammar and arithmetic. The answering of the paid monitresses in these very same subjects was also found to be somewhat inferior. Nevertheless, when all was taken into account, Head Inspector Sheahan was prepared to recommend that all should receive the annual gratuity of 30s. offered by the commissioners 'as rewards for proficiency and good conduct during the year'.<sup>75</sup> Throughout the decade, reports on the junior staff at Trim District Model School continued to stress their progress, even when numbers had to be reduced following the withdrawal of children in response to the Roman Catholic Church's campaign to have denominational control of education recognised. None went further in extolling their praises than W.A. Hunter, then a head inspector, who pronounced, in 1862, that he was

in a position to testify without any hesitation, as I have now the opportunity of witnessing the results of the labours of several young teachers in their own schools throughout the country who had their preparatory training, as pupil teachers or as monitresses, in this establishment. The reports of their district inspectors, the respectable classification which many of them now hold, and my own experience of their work, all concur in testifying to the valuable results accomplished by the Trim Model School, both as regards the instruction imparted, and the special training which fitted them for communicating such instruction to others.<sup>76</sup>

Reports on other schools, though more patchy with regard to detail and frequency, tend to show a training system operating at a moderate to high level of effectiveness. In this respect the classification results for the first four pupil teachers of Clonmel District Model School provide a fitting epitome. Two were classed as First of Second, one Second of Second, and the fourth, First of Third.<sup>77</sup> Despite on-going difficulties in attracting suitable candidates for the pupil-teacherships in Belfast District Model Schools, the training given to the junior staff throughout the 1860s was warmly commented on. The report by Head Inspector O'Callaghan, for 1867, went so far as to claim that 'they are taught how to teach', and that, on graduation, he was confident they would enter on their duties 'with the almost certain hope of being useful and successful'.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twentieth report ... 1853*, App. G, p. 40.

<sup>75</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-seventh report ... 1860*, App. C, p. 121.

<sup>76</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-ninth report ... 1862*, App. B, p. 75.

<sup>77</sup>C.N.E.I., *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, Appendix, p. 270.

<sup>78</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-fourth report ... 1867*, App. B, p. 127.

Occasional concerns regarding the progress of monitresses were outweighed by the general availability of suitable replacements as vacancies arose. This was in sharp contrast to the situation that pertained with regard to their male counterparts, particularly in urban areas. Furthermore, it was universally reported that females who completed the course of training as paid monitresses were more likely to remain in teaching than their male colleagues, many of whom regarded it merely as a gateway position. Newell, in the Galway report for 1857, also held that monitresses made better teachers due to extra exposure to practical work in the classroom.<sup>79</sup> The unfavourable reports on paid monitresses in Waterford and Athy District Model Schools for 1860, though not exceptional, were unusual. In the former, the inspector found them wanting in knowledge of 'some very essential subjects', such as content of the Lesson Books, rules for spelling and arithmetic. Consequently, they did not qualify for the annual gratuity, and were left in no doubt that a failure to show improvement would result in their removal from the establishment. The pupil teachers, for their part, 'acquitted themselves tolerably well'. In Athy, Fleming could not recommend any of the paid monitresses for the annual gratuity, and attributed their poor performance to lack of home study, lack of co-operation with the teaching staff, and a general attitude characterised by 'idleness and neglect'. Here, too, the pupil teachers acquitted themselves 'satisfactorily'.<sup>80</sup>

Concern was more often expressed with the status of the model school as a training establishment, than with the differences between the accomplishments of pupil teachers and paid monitresses. Schools without a residential quarters were perceived to be at a disadvantage. At times, too, criticism was motivated by opportunism. In the cases of Omagh and Lurgan Minor Model Schools, the suspicion is that unfavourable comments by inspectors as to their training capacity formed part of a wider campaign to have them elevated to the higher grade.<sup>81</sup> This was not seen as a problem at Parsonstown, where the junior staff were described, in 1868, as having 'performed most creditably and obtained good classification'. In this case the lack of a residential quarters for pupil teachers was overcome by allowing them £20 annually towards boarding 'with respectable families', while the monitresses resided with their parents.<sup>82</sup> However, the absence of supervision outside of the school day for the junior staff at Monaghan Minor Model School was seen as detrimental to their conduct and progress during one year at least. While the teaching staff were credited with discharging their duties 'in a most satisfactory manner', the conduct and performance of the junior staff was well below expectations. One member was dismissed because of 'frequent irregularity and neglect

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<sup>79</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fourth report ... 1857*, App. A, p. 4.

<sup>80</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-seventh report ... 1860*, App. C, pp 141 & 145.

<sup>81</sup>Omagh Minor Model School - C.N.E.I., *Twenty-sixth report ... 1859*, App. B, p. 79. C.N.E.I., *Twenty-seventh report ... 1860*, App. C, p. 101. Lurgan Minor Model School - C.N.E.I., *Thirty-fifth report ... 1868*, App. B, p. 113.

<sup>82</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-fifth report ... 1868*, App. B, p. 104.

of duty'. The performance at examination of 'some of the senior paid monitors ... did not reflect much credit on them'. This the inspector attributed to their lack of application and to a fallacious belief that one hour daily outside of school hours 'was sufficient time to devote to private study'. Fortunately for them, he was of the opinion that the admonishment he had administered had already brought about a change for the better.<sup>83</sup> That same year the junior staff of Galway District Model School received a rather chequered report. Three of the pupil teachers and both monitresses answered so well at the annual classification examination 'that they might have been placed in First of Third'. However, three other pupil teachers attempted to cheat at the written examination by laying hold of the papers before the proper time. The one judged the most culpable was deprived of his pupil teachership, and the other two were moved to other model schools. All forfeited their gratuities.<sup>84</sup>

Notwithstanding the occasional shortcomings detected by the inspectorate, the view expressed by Newell in his 1862 report on Galway District Model School probably accurately reflected the sentiments of his colleagues. Describing that particular establishment 'as a great public elementary school', he concluded by unequivocally stating 'the superiority of teachers educated at Model Schools [to be] well known to inspectors and ... acknowledged by managers generally'.<sup>85</sup>

The internal records, though they do not call into question the overall trends, do make it clear that the published accounts were not always forthcoming. This was particularly true with regard to criticism of teaching staff. Incidents, in both Waterford and Belfast, indicate a reluctance by the Board and its inspectorate to bring serious, though admittedly isolated occurrences of neglect, to the attention of the public. In the 1858 report for Waterford District Model School, Sheahan stated that there had been 'no complaint of any importance during the year'.<sup>86</sup> In the 1860 report for Belfast District Model School, the inspectors declared that the school continued 'to maintain its well-known reputation for efficiency in its several departments', and that the teaching staff, 'with scarcely any exception', discharged their duties in a satisfactory manner.<sup>87</sup> However, in the case of Waterford, the same head inspector painted a very different picture for the Board of the working of the school. He informed them that it

had been left too much to the pupil teachers and that neither head nor assistant masters had taken due pains to ascertain whether these discharged their duties efficiently or not.

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<sup>83</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-sixth report* ... 1869, p. 150.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>85</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-ninth report* ... 1862, App. B, p. 34.

<sup>86</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-fifth report* ... 1858, App. B, p. 62.

<sup>87</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-seventh report* ... 1860, App. C, p. 130.

Furthermore, based on complaints he had received from parents, he concluded that the withdrawal of 'many respectable children' was due 'less from the opposition of the Roman Catholic clergy, than from an impression that they had not been duly attended to'.<sup>88</sup> A clear departure from Keenan's explicit directive to Miss Collins in the Belfast school, led the Board to inform her

that it is an essential part of her duty not only to superintend the general arrangements of the school, but *daily* to teach and that for the larger portion of each day. As principal teacher she is specially chargeable with the instruction of the highest class. ...[T]his duty she will be on no account permitted to neglect, but she must also make it her business to examine all the remaining classes in turn and that so as to allow of a lesson once a week at least to *each*. She must also *assist* regularly and efficiently in instruction of monitresses.<sup>89</sup>

Even where official reports were critical of the performance of the junior staff, criticisms of teaching staff for the same period were sometimes overlooked. The headmaster for Athy District Model School, when concern was expressed in 1860 over the performance of the paid monitresses, but not the pupil teachers, was directed to pay more attention to written preparation and records.<sup>90</sup> Earlier, in 1856, in Coleraine the headmaster was warned to be careful 'to preserve notes of all lessons given by him to pupil teachers',<sup>91</sup> suggesting that he had been lacking in his preparation. In the published report, P. J. Keenan seemed satisfied to admit that certain unspecified 'permanent improvements in the male department' had not been undertaken, and, thus he could not state that the school was 'in every respect, fulfilling its mission'.<sup>92</sup> In the same year the headmaster of Galway District Model School was warned to apportion more time to the instruction of his pupil teachers, 'so that when they issue from his charge, they may reflect some credit on the institution'.<sup>93</sup> This, and an earlier concern about the progress of certain named members of the junior staff, was not alluded to in the official reports.<sup>94</sup> Similarly, negligence on the part of the headmaster and his assistant in Clonmel District Model School in their duty towards the pupil teachers was not commented upon.<sup>95</sup> The practice, at the time, of combining the reports for the five model schools in the south-east into one, made it more likely that the deficiencies of one would be overlooked. Indeed, the primary concern of Head Inspector Patterson had to do with the disproportionate amount of time given by certain teachers to the teaching of

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<sup>88</sup>N.A.I., ED3/3-6, 12 Oct. 1858.

<sup>89</sup>N.A.I., ED3/3-55, 2 Feb. 1860.

<sup>90</sup>N.A.I., ED3/3-50, 12 Apr. 1860.

<sup>91</sup>N.A.I., ED3/2-78, 29 Oct. 1856.

<sup>92</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-third report ... 1856*, App. B, p. 128.

<sup>93</sup>N.A.I., ED3/2-93, 2 July 1856.

<sup>94</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 10 Aug. 1855.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*, 27 Aug., 26 Nov., 10 Dec. 1867.

extra subjects, under the auspices of the Science and Art Department, for which there were generous rewards.<sup>96</sup>

Apart from Newry, the most serious incidence of a failure to advert to known deficiencies in the published reports related to Limerick District Model School. The concerns of the inspectorate regarding the overall efficiency of the institution were brought to the notice of the Board on a number of occasions between 1857 and 1860. This resulted in resolute action being taken by the inspectorate, at the behest of the Board, to effect an improvement.<sup>97</sup> In March 1860, the district inspector was reported as having taken steps to 'impress the teachers with the importance of their duties [and] the necessity of devoting themselves thoroughly to their efficient discharge'.<sup>98</sup> But, as subsequent developments demonstrated, the resolution of problems at Limerick required more than a mere appeal to a sense of duty. At the nub of the problem was a distinct lack of harmony among the staff and a particularly difficult relationship between the headmaster and the district inspector. The latter was perhaps due to the efforts by officialdom to bring about reform. Matters came to a head when the Board was obliged to investigate 'charges of improper intimacy' between the assistant mistress and the district inspector, Andrew O'Callaghan, on the foot of allegations made by the headmaster. On inquiry these were declared to be 'wholly destitute of foundation' - a finding which led to the headmaster's resignation.<sup>99</sup> In line with the customary practice in relation to investigations of moral waywardness, mention was confined to internal Board records.

Board records aside, the most detailed comment on the effectiveness of the model schools as preparatory training institutes is that contained in evidence of a number of 'expert' witnesses' to the Powis Inquiry. That by Alexander Macdonnell, the resident commissioner, and Daniel O'Sullivan and John Rintoul, Professors in the Central Department was decidedly reassuring. It was Macdonnell's contention that the period of residence in a district model school had a socially elevating effect on pupil teachers. Drawn from the ranks of the peasantry, and from a background of 'coarse' ideas and habits, though 'exceedingly clever', this change was due to their interaction with pupils from a higher social class who were attracted by the superior education available in the model schools. On the question of the morality of the pupil teachers, he believed instances of transgression to be 'very few', and that as a body they were 'remarkably pure in their conduct'.<sup>100</sup> This, apart from some notorious exceptions, was a pretty fair

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<sup>96</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-fourth report ... 1867*, App. B, p. 134.

<sup>97</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 10 July, 4 Dec. 1857, 23 Apr. 1858, 19 Aug. 1859.

<sup>98</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 9 Mar. 1860.

<sup>99</sup>*Ibid.*, 2 Nov. 1860.

<sup>100</sup>*Powis*, iv, 1061 and 1066.



comment on the general body. Professor Rintoul, who was not uncritical of the manner in which the training department was run, was of the opinion that those coming to training were 'far better', as regards preparation, 'since the district model schools were introduced'. Later, when pressed, he stubbornly stuck to the view that pupil teachers trained in model schools, when summoned to Marlborough Street, were 'decidedly' superior to the paid monitors of the ordinary schools.<sup>101</sup> His colleague, Assistant Professor O'Sullivan, was in agreement, declaring 'the young persons from the district model schools, as a rule, [to be] very well grounded'.<sup>102</sup>

Because of their close association with the Board it is reasonable to query the impartiality of the foregoing witnesses. However, corroborating evidence from two other witnesses, one of whom, in particular, had no sympathy for model schools, is available. P.W. Joyce, headmaster of the Central Model School, who had been highly disapproving of arrangements within the Training Department for practical training for teachers, did not level this criticism against the model schools. He attested to the superiority of the pupil teachers. He regarded them, generally, as 'smarter scholars', and well-prepared 'as to scholarship and methods of teaching'.<sup>103</sup> Even more persuasive was the testimony of J.W. Kavanagh, who, for more than a decade, lost no opportunity to excoriate the National Board on its arrangements and performance. Putting aside his well-known religious objection, he described the model schools as 'excellent' when compared with the ordinary schools. In a comment he described them as having

superior teachers, well paid, amply supplied with all the material aids for instruction; children of a good class of life ... well supplied with books and requisites - the *éclat* of public examinations by the inspectors, large premiums, and the temptation of promotion of different offices connected with the model and other schools, and the institution generally.<sup>104</sup>

When questioned as to his attitude to them as 'good training schools', he re-affirmed his belief 'with regard to the excellence of character of the secular instruction aimed at in them...'<sup>105</sup> When earlier asked for his opinion both as to secular education and the standard of pupil teachers in the model schools, he believed the former to be 'generally well given'. Of the pupil teachers, his view concurred with that of the other witnesses, declaring them to be 'very much superior to monitors from ordinary national schools'. When asked for his view of the model schools as centres of training and elementary education, 'as far as secular instruction is concerned', he declared them to be

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<sup>101</sup>Ibid., iv 1158 and 1161.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., iii, 312.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., iii 272.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., iii 499.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., iv, 976.

excellent ... irrespective of the head of expense and of their receiving State grants, and also of the religious difficulties involved. The teachers are, on the whole, some of the best of the elementary teachers in Ireland...<sup>106</sup>

His overall view on the efficiency of the model schools, coming from a person decidedly inimical to their continuance under their present management, must be accorded due credence. His testimony supports the verdict that, excepting occasional lapses and weaknesses, they operated to a high degree of efficiency.

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<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*, iii, 395.

### **Levels of Attachment and Attrition**

Irrespective of the manner in which they operated, the primary index of the success or failure of the model schools was the impact their combined output had on the numbers of trained teachers in the profession at large. In so far as the percentage of trained teachers as a proportion of the whole fell during their existence they must be regarded as a failure. There are several reasons for this, the principal being the steady growth of the national system. This, in the absence of a corresponding increase in the training capacity of the model schools, ensured that the ability of the schools to provide sufficient trained teachers to meet the needs of the system declined over time. The hostile stance of the Roman Catholic Church exacerbated the problem, particularly from 1863 on the interdict on Roman Catholics presenting themselves for training, while it did not dramatically reduce intake from that quarter, made those who ignored the ban virtually unemployable as teachers in national schools under clerical patronage. The meagre remuneration on offer to practically all national teachers, apart from those fortunate to secure positions within the model school network, was also important since it prompted many practising teachers to depart from the Board's service, and diminished the commitment of others to the profession. The training, whether in model schools or in Marlborough Street, concentrating, as it did, on raising academic standards to the neglect of pedagogical proficiency, prepared the recipients for employments that were more lucrative and of superior status to that of teaching. While this may have been an unintended consequence of the Board's initiative, it did not pass unnoticed by those who sought entry to the training system. This was most noticeable with men. Restricted employment opportunities for females encouraged the view that teaching provided a respectable means of livelihood. For them, the call of 'domestic duties' was the single greatest factor that gave rise to withdrawals from the profession.

#### ***10.1 Decline in proportion of trained teachers***

The National Board of Education's teacher training initiative failed palpably to meet the staffing demands of its expanding network of schools as the proportion of untrained teachers within the system not just remained stubbornly high, it actually increased. In 1854, 45 per cent were trained. Thirteen years later this had dropped to 42 per cent, and it fell further to under 39 per cent in 1874 when, of the 9,960 teachers in the Board's service, just 3,842 had undergone a course of training (*Table III*). With 61 per cent of the body untrained at that date, not only had the Board's efforts over the previous quarter century failed to improve the situation, there had in fact been a retrogression. Moreover, the situation continued to disimprove. The annual reports for the second half of the decade

indicate that the percentage of those trained fell further to between 31 and 34 per cent (*Table VI*). On the face of it, the lack of capacity at the Board's Central Training Establishment - its throughput averaged 180 annually - was crucial. However, a closer examination of the issue indicates that even if the Board had been in a position to increase greatly the intake the overall situation would not have altered substantially because of other problems. The two defining factors were religious and economic.

The impact of the reservations of the Roman Catholic Church on the training regime of the model schools is clearly illustrated by the Board's statistics. Throughout the 1870s Roman Catholics formed on average 45 per cent of those trained annually, though it is noteworthy that the annual percentage fell from *circa* 50 per cent in the early part of the decade to below 40 per cent at its end.<sup>1</sup> A breakdown by denomination of those in the Board's service - between trained and untrained - shows how more effective the Roman Catholic campaign was when it came to the control of placement. Of those in the Board's service in 1874 (*Table III*), 77 per cent were Roman Catholics, which correlates exactly with their percentage of the country's population in the 1871 census.<sup>2</sup> This was where the similarity ended, however. At 69 per cent they were underrepresented amongst the 'trained', while, at 82 per cent, they were over-represented among the 'untrained'. Within the general body of Roman Catholic teachers, 65 per cent were untrained. The comparable figures for those of the Established and Presbyterian Churches stood at 47 per cent in each case. But religion was not the only determinant, as there is the suggestion that, at least in some districts, the managers made their selections more on the basis of local factors than that of fitness for the position. Mr. R.C. McKell, district inspector for Boyle, held that well-qualified 'outsiders' were at a distinct disadvantage in Connacht.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, J.C. McNamara, the district inspector for Letterkenny, pointed out that Co. Donegal 'managers are guided chiefly by local influences ... [and] find it very inconvenient to look for a teacher beyond their own or a neighbouring parish'. He subsequently repeated his concerns over the preference for 'home-made' teachers, 'who as a rule simply continue to work in the same old paths and to follow the same faulty methods as their predecessors ...'.<sup>4</sup> By 1881, when the government

<sup>1</sup> Roman Catholics as a percentage of those trained annually - 1870 - 51%; 1871 - 49%; 1872 - 46%; 1873 - 52%; 1874 - 45%; 1875 - 53%; 1876 - 44%; 1877 - 36%; 1878 - 35%; 1879 - 43%. Data is taken from the relevant annual *Reports*.

<sup>2</sup> W.E. Vaughan and A. Fitzpatrick (eds), *Irish historical statistics - population 1821-1871*, (Dublin, 1978), p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Forty-sixth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1879*, [C 2592], H.C. 1880, xxiii (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Forty-sixth report ... 1879*), App. B, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> *Forty-seventh report of the commissioners of national education for the year 1880*, [C 2925], H.C. 1881, xxxiv (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Forty-seventh report ... 1880*), App. B, p. 23; *Fifty-second report of the commissioners of national education for the year 1885*, [C 4800], H.C. 1886, xxvii (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Fifty-second report ... 1885*), App. C, p. 153.

was on the verge of accepting the inevitability of a denominational system of training, the proportion of Roman Catholic teachers in the system had fallen still further. Numbering just 60 per cent of trained teachers, they accounted for 87 per cent of all untrained.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the vast majority of Roman Catholics entered the teaching profession at this point through the ranks of the untrained. Those who came through the Board's training network of model schools and/or the Central Training Establishment cannot seriously have entertained prospects of obtaining employment in ordinary national schools that were predominantly under clerical patronage. As such, their representation among those in training ceased to be of practical relevance from the mid-1860s onwards.

*Table III*

**Teachers in the Board's service in 1874**  
(The figures are ordered 'Trained' - 'Untrained' Teachers)

Religious Denomination	Male	Female	Total	% Trained
Roman Catholic	1739 - 2178	901 - 2829	7647	34.9%
Established Church	248 - 182	178 - 198	806	52.8%
Presbyterian	477 - 224	243 - 426	1370	52.5%
Others	29 - 29	27 - 40	125	46.8%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2493 - 2613</b>	<b>1349 - 3505</b>	<b>9960</b>	<b>38.5%</b>

(Source: Adapted from figures given in *M.C.N.E.I.*, 18 Dec. 1874)

### 10.2 The commitment of the practising teacher

Parallel with this intractable denominational issue, the Board had also to come to terms with the steady haemorrhage of practising teachers, trained and experienced untrained, from the service. A significant proportion of those trained annually did not resume teaching on completion of the course. This situation was compounded by the withdrawal annually of anything from 3.5 to 7 per cent of the teaching force. Under these circumstances the proportion of trained teachers dropped slowly, but inexorably, from 48 per cent at its peak in 1856 to 30 per cent in 1880.<sup>6</sup>

It is clear from data made available to the Powis Commission (*Table IV*) that the majority of departures from teaching were economically motivated. This is reflected in the fact that

<sup>5</sup> *Forty-ninth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1881*, [C 3243], H.C. 1882, xxiv (henceforth *C.N.E.I.*, *Forty-ninth report ... 1881*), p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> In 1856, of 5385 in Board's service, 2591 were trained, while in 1880, of 10674 in the Board's service 3309 were trained - *C.N.E.I.*, *Twenty-third report ... 1856*, p. x and *C.N.E.I.*, *Forty-seventh report ... 1880*, p. 14.

of the 3194 withdrawals from service during the period 1863-67, one-quarter were trained teachers. Moreover, they matched the untrained in their readiness to leave as in respect of those who emigrated or who chose 'other pursuits'. Those that emigrated (15 per cent) spent, on average, five and a half years in the Board's service, while those that secured other employment (45 per cent) generally taught for just under five years.

<sup>7</sup>*Table IV*

**Vacancies in the Teaching Staff 1863-67**

(The figures within brackets refer to 'Trained' / 'Untrained' teachers)

	<u>Death</u>	<u>Old Age</u>	<u>Sickness</u>	<u>Dismissed</u>	<u>Emigrated</u>	<u>Other Pursuits</u>	<u>Totals</u>
1863	51(18/33)	8(2/6)	34(13/21)	160(17/143)	77(22/55)	233(66/167)	563(138/365)
1864	55(21/34)	8(3/5)	43(16/27)	132(22/110)	93(24/69)	242(51/191)	573(137/436)
1865	42(22/20)	20(7/13)	60(24/36)	131(25/106)	119(32/87)	287(72/215)	659(182/477)
1866	52(14/38)	12(4/8)	57(26/31)	130(22/108)	113(26/87)	330(87/243)	694(179/515)
1867	49(12/37)	21(10/11)	88(39/49)	104(12/92)	85(26/59)	358(78/280)	705(177/528)
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>249(7.8%)</b>	<b>69(2.1%)</b>	<b>282(8.8%)</b>	<b>657(20.5%)</b>	<b>487(15.2%)</b>	<b>1450(45.3%)</b>	<b>3194(813/2381)</b>

(Source: *Powis*, vii, 350-7)

The economic reasons that prompted this high level of withdrawal from teaching, though widely acknowledged, were not aired as prominently in the 1860s and 1870s as they had been in the late 1850s. Nonetheless, the attitude was sympathetic. Even Cardinal Cullen, while holding that some teachers sought too much, believed 'they should get enough to enable them to live according to their state'. On £24, the amount 'many of them get ....it is impossible to support themselves,' he declared.<sup>8</sup> The attitude of the press was supportive. Describing teachers as 'an intelligent and thoughtful class of men', *The Nation* was of the opinion that they '[had] a just claim upon the government for an increase of the miserable stipends that are allotted to them...'.<sup>9</sup> *The Freeman's Journal* concurred. The annual income of Irish teachers was half that of their English equivalents - generally less than £40 p.a. Most male teachers earned no more than £35 annually, and women £28. The paper observed that in order to obtain this 'miserable stipend' teachers had to undergo a strict course of training, followed by a competitive examination and, unlike any other 'class of civil servants', they were vulnerable to dismissal 'in a perfectly arbitrary manner'. In light of the teachers' power of 'moulding the minds and thoughts of the future people of Ireland', the paper urged on the government that

<sup>7</sup>When natural wastage was excluded, only in respect of 'dismissals' (21 per cent) were the untrained disproportionately affected - a finding one would expect.

<sup>8</sup>*Powis*, iv, 1184.

<sup>9</sup>N.L.I., *Larcom Papers*, MS 7653: *The Nation*, 26 Sept. 1868.

the coming session will not close without the national school teachers of Ireland being placed in a position more in accordance with their status, their education, and the responsible duties intrusted to them.<sup>10</sup>

The government was unmoved. In December 1867 the commissioners were not prepared to bring a memorial from the 'national teachers of Ireland' seeking an increase in salaries to the notice of the Treasury on account of the imminent Royal Commission of Inquiry.<sup>11</sup> The Powis Commission recommendation that a 'payment by results' system be introduced ensured that the commissioners still felt no obligation to respond.<sup>12</sup>

Official prevarication and lack of empathy with the predicament of the teacher guaranteed that the rate of economically motivated departure from the profession remained disturbingly high throughout the 1870s. The situation was at its worst in the early 1870s. In 1872, for example, trained teachers constituted 43 per cent of all withdrawals, whilst 60 per cent of those leaving did so for economic reasons.<sup>13</sup> There was some improvement thereafter (*Table V*) as withdrawal rates reverted to the lower levels of the mid-1860s. It must be borne in mind that the official returns refer only to withdrawals of a 'permanent' nature, and that they tend to understate the true position. Attendance to 'domestic duties' was the major factor in female teachers withdrawing from the service, but it is noteworthy that they did so in equal proportion between those trained and untrained. Only in the case of 'dismissals' and the 'Civil Service' was there any significant discrepancy. Dismissals, of course, were invoked by managers of individual schools not by the Board's officers, though the latter, through the threat of withdrawal of government support, were in a position to influence the outcome. The Civil Service held a greater attraction for untrained as opposed to trained teachers. Accounting for 11 per cent of all withdrawals, the untrained exceeded the trained by a factor of almost three. This ratio may have been influenced by the Board decision, at the prompting of the Treasury, to recoup up to £20 from each trained teacher entering the Civil Service.<sup>14</sup> Emigration, at 18 per cent, was another crucial force in drawing teachers from the profession. In this case, it proved equally attractive to both trained and untrained.

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Feb. 1871.

<sup>11</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 10 Dec. 1867.

<sup>12</sup>Of the 129 'Conclusions and Recommendations' that on payment by results ranked second (*Powis*, i, 522).

<sup>13</sup>*C.N.E.I., Forty-ninth report ... 1881*, p. 36.

<sup>14</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 21 Mar., 6 June 1871.

Table V

**Withdrawals from Board's service 1874-1880**  
(The figures within brackets refer to 'Trained'/'Untrained' teachers)

	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	Totals
<b>Destinations</b>								
Other Schools	22 (12/10)	7 (3/4)	14 (7/7)	9 (4/5)	13 (6/7)	6 (2/4)	10 (-/10)	81 (34/71)
Civil Service	38 (/33)	42 (6/36)	36 (3/33)	23 (2/21)	37 (2/25)	24 (2/22)	31 (1/30)	231 (21/210)
Commercial Pursuits	21 (6/15)	17 (7/10)	5 (1/4)	11 (1/10)	6 (1/5)	17 (6/11)	13 (5/8)	90 (27/63)
Collegiate/Religious Vocations	26 (9/17)	17 (4/13)	16 (3/13)	16 (7/9)	20 (6/14)	13 (3/10)	25 (4/21)	133 (26/97)
Domestic Duties	74 (23/51)	62 (18/44)	108 (28/80)	96 (23/73)	89 (18/71)	71 (16/55)	81 (18/63)	581 (144/337)
Emigrated	63 (22/41)	25 (17/8)	25 (8/17)	30 (8/22)	42 (8/34)	30 (7/23)	67 (12/55)	282 (82/200)
Dismissed	80 (10/70)	26 (10/16)	61 (18/43)	30 (9/21)	61 (7/54)	78 (9/69)	139 (12/127)	475 (75/400)
Age/Ill Health	24 (13/11)	23 (13/10)	25 (11/14)	22 (10/12)	35 (8/27)	42 (25/17)	51 (22/29)	222 (102/120)
Retirement Gratuities	68 (37/31)	38 (26/12)	53 (37/16)	66 (39/27)	47 (28/19)	48 (31/17)	180 (79/101)	500 (277/223)
Died	57 (27/30)	29 (8/21)	76 (24/53)	61 (21/40)	85 (32/53)	70 (27/43)	96 (39/57)	474 (178/206)
Other Reasons	27 (9/18)	49 (12/37)	3 (1/2)	-----	-----	-----	-----	79 (22/57)
Unknown	28 (13/15)	7 (3/4)	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	35 (16/19)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>528</b> (186/342) (35%/65%)	<b>342</b> (127/215) (37%/63%)	<b>422</b> (141/281) (35%/65%)	<b>364</b> (124/240) (34%/66%)	<b>435</b> (126/309) (29%/71%)	<b>399</b> (128/271) (32%/68%)	<b>693</b> (214/479) (31%/69%)	<b>3183</b> (1046/2137) (33%/67%)

Source: Data is taken from the relevant *Annual Reports*. However, it should be noted that returns are incomplete, and 'Withdrawals' refer only to those believed by the inspectors to be of a 'permanent' nature. For 1875 and 1876 total 'withdrawals' were given and amounted to 745 and 688, respectively.



The modest calibre of new entrants to the profession throughout the 1870s served to intensify the problem faced by the Board in securing a trained teaching profession. No more than half of those entering teaching in the 1870s underwent rudimentary training.<sup>15</sup> Of these, only a minority came through the model school system. They accounted for just 14 per cent or 801 of the 5771 new appointments between 1872 and 1880 (*Table VI*).

However, the commissioners contrived to present a brave face, claiming in the early 1870s that 'upwards of fifty per cent' of new teachers had received 'some preparation of a technical character for their office'. This embraced those who had undergone the elementary course of training, whether in model schools, convent schools, or ordinary national schools, but the majority were paid monitors in ordinary national schools. Three hundred and eighty-seven, or 48.3 per cent, of the 801 new appointments made in 1872 received no prior training of any kind<sup>16</sup>, and this proportion was maintained throughout the decade.

*Table VI*

**Withdrawals and New Posts 1872-83**

	Withdrawals	New Posts	Filled from Model Schools	Total in Service	% Trained
1872	100(12.5%)	801	100(12.5%)	9,756	36%
1873	412(4.2%)	679	104(15%)	9,802	36%
1874	528(5.2%)	540	76(14%)	10,143	35%
1875	745(7.2%)	545	77(14%)	10,281	34%
1876	688(6.7%)	817	98(12%)	10,277	34%
1877	364(3.5%)	687	87(12.6%)	10,289	34%
1878	425(4.0%)	742	98(13.2%)	10,674	32%
1879	399(3.7%)	490	76(15.5%)	10,842	32%
1880	693(6.5%)	567	85(15%)	10,674	31%
1881	469(4.4%)	530	90(17%)	10,621	33%
1882	453(4.3%)	631	108(17%)	10,532	33%
1883	466(4.4%)	638	100(16%)	10,621	32%

(Source: Data is from the relevant *Annual Reports*, 1872-83.)

Of those that underwent the training course, data in the *Annual Reports* for the second half of the 1870s indicate that a growing proportion of these entered training direct from model schools and had not served as practising teachers. Of the 150 trained in 1875, forty-two, or 28 per cent, were described as 'candidate teachers'. In 1877, fifty-one, or 26 per cent, of the 197 were described as 'chiefly ex-pupil teachers, ex-monitors, [or] distinguished pupils'. In

<sup>15</sup>Of the 2816 appointed to national schools between 1863 and 1867, 53 per cent, at best, had some rudimentary training (*Powis*, vii, 358).

<sup>16</sup>*Thirty-ninth report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland for the year 1872*, [C 805], H.C. 1873, xxv (henceforth C.N.E.I., *Thirty-ninth report ... 1872*), p. 35.

1878 and 1879, this class of candidate teacher accounted for just over half of the 166 and 161 summoned to training for those years. These figures can have given little comfort. There can be no doubt that many entrants to the training course who came direct from model schools were concerned more with enhancing their prospects of employment outside of teaching than seeking positions within the profession. In this their attitude was no different to that of the practising teacher called to training.

The number of new appointments made during the period 1872- 80 totalled 5,868, which exceeded the number of *recorded* withdrawals by 1,174. As a result, the number of teachers in the Board's service increased from 9,756 to 10,674. However, this masks the negative impact on the proportion of trained teachers in the workforce which fell from 36 to 31 per cent over these nine years. This was despite the number of newly trained teachers - 1,624 - outstripping the number of withdrawals of trained teachers -1,384 - over all categories (*Table VI*). The difference - 240 - an increase of 17 per cent, should have resulted in a slight rise in the proportion of trained teachers. That the reverse proved to be the case serves only to confirm that a large proportion of those newly trained either did not succeed in gaining positions or did not choose to return to their former jobs. Were they Roman Catholic it is highly unlikely that they would have had the option. Over the nine years, on average, they constituted 43 per cent of the annual training cohort. Assuming that a negligible number of these obtained positions as national teachers, the maximum number of newly trained teachers during the period was just 926 - 458 fewer than the total for trained withdrawals. The relatively high numbers of teachers of the Roman Catholic faith that continued to participate in the Board's training course and their inability to secure employment in the profession as a consequence must call into question their motives. To many the teacher training course can only have been seen as a means of entry to a more financially rewarding occupation. As such, the religious and economic difficulties were complementary and intertwined factors in effecting an overall reduction in the proportion of those trained within the teaching body.

Significantly, this situation contrasted sharply with that then pertaining in Scotland, where roughly the same number of teachers were employed. The Council of Education there reported in the mid-1870s that of the 2,524 masters in schools for which reports had been presented, 69.6 per cent had been trained: 50.9 per cent had been trained for two years, 13.3 per cent for one year, and 5.4 per cent for less than one year. That left 766 or 30.4 per cent who were untrained - the reverse of the Irish situation. The findings were even more positive for the schoolmistresses. Of the 1,287 inspected, 69.6 per cent had undergone the two-year course of training, 10.8 per cent the one-year course, while 1.7 per cent had the

benefit of the shortest course. That left just 230 or 17.8 per cent untrained. This achievement was all the more remarkable considering that the majority of Scottish teachers underwent a course of training more than four times the duration of that in Ireland. Scottish training colleges accommodated 1,042 students and could provide 500 trained teachers annually, which was sufficient to replace waste reckoned at 6 per cent for the country's 8,300 teachers.<sup>17</sup> The figure for 'waste' in Ireland was much the same as that for Scotland. There, however, the greater throughput of trained teachers more than compensated for this loss. Ireland's much smaller training capacity - it averaged out at 180 annually - was clearly a contributory factor to the declining proportion of trained teachers among the workforce, even allowing for the shorter period of training. But, had the Treasury been willing to invest in the expansion of the teacher training intake, the failure to make the position of teacher remuneratively attractive to those with the necessary acquirements, and a reluctance to tackle the denominational issue would have resulted in little if any improvement.<sup>18</sup> If anything, it could have led to the teacher training course being of even less relevance to practising teachers.

### *10.3 The commitment of the candidate teacher*

Given the effective prohibition imposed on Roman Catholics and the meagre salary on offer, one must question the commitment of the model school candidate teachers to the profession, and assess its impact on the effectiveness of the Board's preparatory training scheme. The figures provided by the Powis Commission suggest that there was a high level of attrition among those who had come through the model school system - greater among monitors than among pupil teachers throughout its history (*Table VII*).

Of the monitors, 467 or 36.8 per cent, and 264 of the pupil teachers, or 25.5 per cent, were 'known to be in the Board's service' in 1867. In other words, of the total of 2,304 admitted to training from 1849, just 731 or 31.7 per cent remained in teaching less than twenty years later.<sup>19</sup> By extension, virtually 70 per cent either never sought employment as teachers or forsook the profession in favour of other pursuits. Since women were obliged to abandon teaching in favour of 'domestic' duties upon marriage, this accounts for the fact that only a quarter of their number remained in the Board's service. There is no comparable explanation for the loss of male teachers, and given that the earliest graduates from the model schools would at that stage have been no more than forty years of age, death, age,

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<sup>17</sup> *Report of the Committee of Council of Education in Scotland, 1875/76, H.C. [C-1514]*, pp XI-XII.

<sup>18</sup> The Powis Commission did not recommend any fundamental changes to the denominational arrangements for teacher training (*Powis*, i, 530).

<sup>19</sup> *Powis*, vii, 94.

and ill-health must be disregarded as major factors. Moreover, there is little by way of a discernible pattern either with regard to geographical clustering or predominant religious composition to which one can appeal. At best, one can draw attention to some of its more remarkable features.

*Table VII*

**Pupil Teachers and Paid Monitors admitted to each model school to 1867.**  
(Schools are listed by year of opening).

	Pupil Teachers				Paid Monitors		
	Year of opening	Total since opening	Total still in service	Per cent	Total since opening	Total still in service	Per cent
Ballymena	1849	117	51	43.6%	50	12	24.0%
Clonmel	1849	110	23	20.9%	65	15	23.1%
Dunmanway	1849	67	21	31.3%	14	6	42.9%
Newry	1849	95	36	37.9%	44	4	31.8%
West Dublin	1849	0	0	0.0%	43	0	0.0%
Bailieborough	1850	58	13	22.4%	49	13	26.5%
Coleraine	1850	99	26	26.3%	47	20	42.6%
Trim	1850	96	42	43.8%	47	13	27.7%
Athy	1852	47	18	38.3%	35	10	28.6%
Galway	1853	97	41	42.3%	43	15	34.9%
Kilkenny	1854	54	15	27.8%	58	13	22.4%
Limerick	1855	57	30	52.6%	38	18	47.4%
Waterford	1855	61	16	26.2%	43	11	25.6%
Ballymoney	1856	0	0	0.0%	27	4	14.8%
Belfast	1857	167	73	43.7%	192	59	30.7%
Inchicore	1857	0	0	0.0%	21	3	14.3%
Omagh	1860	0	0	0.0%	35	5	14.3%
Parsonstown	1860	0	0	0.0%	12	1	8.3%
Carrickfergus	1861	0	0	0.0%	28	5	17.9%
Monaghan	1861	0	0	0.0%	33	6	18.2%
Newtownstewa	1861	0	0	0.0%	5	0	0.0%
Enniscorthy	1862	16	7	43.8%	6	0	0.0%
Londonderry	1862	45	23	51.1%	25	10	40.0%
Newtownards	1862	39	20	51.3%	23	4	17.4%
Lurgan	1863	0	0	0.0%	24	6	25.0%
Sligo	1863	20	10	50.0%	10	1	10.0%
Cork	1865	17	2	11.8%	17	0	0.0%
Enniskillen	1867	6	0	0.0%	2	0	0.0%
<b>Totals</b>		<b>1268</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>36.8%</b>	<b>1036</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>25.5%</b>

(Source: *Powis*, vii, 94.)

The most striking feature of the ten model schools established between 1849 and 1852 is that just 29.5 per cent of their junior staff remained in service. This was somewhat less than the average of 31.1 per cent, but this is not unexpected since there was wide variation between schools. Thus, Dunmanway, Galway, Newry, and Trim schools were comfortably above the mean, while the schools at Bailieborough and Clonmel, at 24.5 and 22 per cent respectively, fell well short. Those of Athy, Ballymena, and Coleraine were close to the average. The returns for Dublin West, which show that none of the junior staff was a practising teacher, confirms that it was a complete failure as a preparatory training institute.

Of the fourteen model schools established between 1853 and 1862, there are two noteworthy features. Firstly, the relative loyalty of the graduates of the Limerick and Londonderry model schools to the teaching profession, which at 50 and 45.5 per cent respectively, far outstripped all others. Secondly, the returns indicate that the minor model schools - including Inchicore Railway Model School - were not taken seriously as preparatory training centres, since only 12.5 per cent of their junior staff remained in teaching in 1867. In absolute terms, the seven minor model schools of Ballymoney, Carrickfergus, Inchicore, Monaghan, Newtownstewart, Omagh, and Parsonstown attracted just 161 students as paid monitors, of whom a mere 24 (or 15 per cent) remained in the service. The record of Newtownstewart was especially dismal; between 1861 and 1867 five paid monitors served on the staff. Yet, none was a practising teacher in 1867. Of the five district model schools - Belfast, Enniscorthy, Kilkenny, Newtownards, and Waterford - established during this second phase, Belfast processed the largest number of junior staff. Of the 359 who received their preparatory training there, 132 or 36.7 per cent were still teaching in 1867. The percentage for the Newtownards school was marginally better at 38.7. There is, as this suggests, a noticeable difference between the returns for northern and southern schools. The returns for the Kilkenny and Waterford schools, which over the period had an aggregate junior staff of 216, indicate that just one-quarter remained in the Board's service. The figure for Enniscorthy school (31.8 per cent) was appreciably higher, But this is somewhat deceptive, since only 7 of the 16 pupil teachers and none of the 6 paid monitors were still in teaching in 1867. The comparatively low retention rates are a particularly sensitive measure of the impact of clerical opposition especially where, as in Enniscorthy, junior staff were non-residential. Pupil teachers who boarded were less likely to be affected by the opposition, and more likely to possess a commitment to the profession.

However, at the time of the returns, even this category of candidate teacher was not to be found in the school.<sup>20</sup>

Some further insights into the commitment of those admitted to the model school preparatory training system can be gleaned from inspectors' observations and statistical data in the various *Annual Reports*. In keeping with other aspects of the operation of the national system, the quality of the information varied considerably, but it is still possible to identify some 1,310 junior staff over the twenty-year period, 1851 to 1871.<sup>21</sup> Of these no information is available as to 'destination' of 396 of the candidate teachers, while a further 196 were described as 'still at school' when the data was compiled. The remaining 718 preparatory students can be placed in two broad categories - those that remained in teaching and those that did not. Just over one quarter - 186 - fell into this latter category, of whom 80

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., vii, 93. The remaining four schools - Cork, Enniskillen, Lurgan, and Sligo - were not long enough in operation to draw firm conclusions. Though it is worth noting that Sligo was recorded as having a 50% retention rate.

<sup>21</sup>The database was compiled from the following C.N.E.I. reports: **Athy** - *Twenty-third report* ... 1856, App. B, pp 101, 106; *Twenty-fifth report* ... 1858, App. B, pp 68-9; *Twenty-eighth report* ... 1862, App. B, pp 95-6. **Bailieborough** - *Twentieth report* ... 1853, App. G, p. 69; *Twenty-first report* ... 1854, App. G, pp 58, 60-1; *Twenty-sixth report* ... 1859, App. B, p. 67; *Twenty-seventh report* ... 1860, App. C, p. 126; *Twenty-eighth report* ... 1861, App. C, p. 144; *Twenty-ninth report* ... 1862, App. B, p. 90. **Ballymena** - *Eighteenth report* ... 1851, App. B, pp 146-7; *Nineteenth report* ... 1852, App. H, pp 104-5; *Twenty-second report* ... 1855, App. G, p. 220; *Twenty-fifth report* ... 1858, App. B, p. 37; *Twenty-sixth report* ... 1859, App. B, p. 60; *Twenty-seventh report* ... 1860, App. C, p. 99; *Twenty-eighth report* ... 1861, App. C, pp 125-6; *Twenty-ninth report* ... 1862, App. B, p. 55; *Thirty-fifth report* ... 1868, App. B, p. 154. **Ballymoney** - *Twenty-ninth report* ... 1862, App. B, pp 111-2. **Carrickfergus** - *Twenty-eighth report* ... 1861, App. C., p. 129; *Thirty-fifth report* ... 1868, App. B, p. 191. **Clonmel** - *Nineteenth report* ... 1852, App. H, pp 92-3; *Twentieth report* ... 1853, App. G, p. 106; *Twenty-first report* ... 1854, App. G, p. 96; *Twenty-third report* ... 1856, App. B, p. 95; *Twenty-fourth report* ... 1857, App. A, p. 106; *Thirty-sixth report* ... 1869, App. B, p. 125; *Thirty-seventh report* ... 1870, App. B, p. 135; N.A.I., ED9/21-2. **Coleraine** - *Eighteenth report* ... 1851, App. B, pp 132-3; *Nineteenth report* ... 1852, App. H, p. 171; *Twenty-second report* ... 1855, App. G, pp 241-2; *Twenty-seventh report* ... 1860, App. C, p. 116; *Twenty-eighth report* ... 1861, App. C, p. 121. **Cork** - *Thirty-fifth report* ... 1868, App. B, p. 146; *Thirty-sixth report* ... 1869, App. B, p. 133; *Thirty-seventh report* ... 1870, App. B, p. 131. **Dunmanway** - *Nineteenth report* ... 1852, App. H, pp 137-9; *Twenty-fourth report* ... 1857, App. A, p. 26; *Thirty-fifth report* ... 1868, App. B., App. B, p. 108; *Thirty-sixth report* ... 1869, App. B, p. 135; *Thirty-eighth report* ... 1871, App. B, p. 137. **Galway** - *Twenty-fourth report* ... 1857, App. A, p. 4. **Kilkenny** - *Twenty-fourth report* ... 1857, App. A, pp 121-3. **Limerick** - *Twenty-fourth report* ... 1857, App. A, p. 37. **Londonderry** - *Twenty-ninth report* ... 1862, App. B, pp 103-4. **Lurgan** - *Thirty-fifth report* ... 1868, App. B, p. 114. **Monaghan** - *Thirty-fifth report* ... 1868, App. B, p. 113; *Thirty-eighth report* ... 1871, App. B, p. 95. **Newry** - *Nineteenth report* ... 1852, App. H, p. 156; *Twenty-first report* ... 1854, App. G, p. 67; *Twenty-third report* ... 1856, App. B, p. 88; *Twenty-fifth report* ... 1858, App. B, p. 44; *Twenty-sixth report* ... 1859, App. B, p. 62; *Thirty-second report* ... 1865, App. B, pp 101, 104; *Thirty-third report* ... 1866, App. B, pp 130 and 133. **Newtownards** - *Twenty-ninth report* ... 1862, App. B, p. 63; *Thirty-first report* ... 1864, App. B, p. 46; *Thirty-second report* ... 1865, App. B, p. 106; *Thirty-fifth report* ... 1868, App. B, p. 96; *Thirty-eighth report* ... 1871, App. B, p. 87. **Omagh** - *Twenty-seventh report* ... 1860, App. C, p. 102; *Twenty-ninth report* ... 1862, App. B, p. 108. **Parsonstown** - *Twenty-eighth report* ... 1861, App. C, p. 76. **Trim** - *Eighteenth report* ... 1851, App. B, p. 94; *Twentieth report* ... 1853, App. G, p. 52; *Twenty-sixth report* ... 1859, App. B, pp 79-80; *Twenty-seventh report* ... 1860, App. C, p. 121; *Twenty-eighth report* ... 1861, App. C, p. 137. **Waterford** - *Twenty-fifth report* ... 1858, App. B, pp 63-4; *Thirty-fifth report* ... 1868, App. B, p. 165; *Thirty-seventh report* ... 1870, App. B, p. 140. **West Dublin** - *Twenty-fifth report* ... 1858, App. B, p. 28; *Thirty-third report* ... 1866, App. B, p. 125; *Thirty-fourth report* ... 1867, App. B, p. 91.

failed to complete the preparatory course of training for a variety of reasons. Of the remaining 106, emigration and other employments account for 91, while the balance left teaching to pursue further studies or a religious vocation. Of the 532 that chose to pursue a career in teaching, three-quarters secured positions in ordinary national schools; a small number found employment in model schools or schools not connected with the Board, while the remaining 64 - or 12 per cent - went on for further training. Of these, one-quarter only are recorded subsequently as taking up employment as national teachers, which reinforces the argument that the more advanced courses of training were availed of to avoid teaching as a profession. In all some 446, or 62 per cent of candidate teachers from model schools chose national teaching as their initial occupation.

The rate of attachment for those who secured employment on the senior staff of model schools was significantly higher. Of the thirty-five so appointed, this was the final recorded destination for all but five. Since senior staff in model schools were in receipt of markedly superior emoluments than those in ordinary national schools, this high level of retention is not surprising. By contrast the attrition rate among the 406 individuals who secured employment in ordinary national schools was higher, though this is impossible to calculate accurately because of weaknesses in the data. Subsequent destinations were noted for just 80, or 20 per cent of these, of whom only thirty remained in teaching. No information as to subsequent employment was recorded for 324 of those that went direct to positions in national schools. But 42 national teachers were recorded as severing their connection with the Board. For the majority of these the decision to leave came down to economics. Six obtained alternative employment, while exactly one-half emigrated.

In sum, just fewer than half (532 out of 1,074) of those that completed the preparatory course of training in the model schools pursued a career in teaching. Those appointed direct to the staff of a model school were most likely to remain in the Board's service, due to the superior rates of pay and conditions. Of those that went from the model schools to Marlborough Street - either to the 'Special Class' or the final training course (64) - as few as one-quarter may subsequently have practised as teachers. The data for the largest number - those who were employed in ordinary national schools - is not sufficiently comprehensive to allow one to draw firm conclusions as to their subsequent employment profile. But for the 505 model school graduates who remained in one capacity or another under the Board, whether as practising teachers or teachers in training, second destinations were recorded for a total of 113. Of these, the final stated destination for sixty-three was outside of teaching. When this is factored in, the number for whom the final destination was stated to be teacher in a national school was 442, or 41 per cent of the 1,074 who had

completed the course of preparatory training. It is unsafe to assume that where no subsequent destination was recorded the individual invariably remained in the Board's service. Other sources indicate a higher level of attrition.

The comments of inspectors shed no light on the subsequent employment of junior staff, but it is indicative that the optimism that was a feature of their reports in the early 1860s was not sustained. Those for the Belfast school in the early 1860s were easily the most upbeat. In 1861 Head Inspector James Patten wrote of the 'marked success of this Model School as a training institute for young teachers'. In supporting this claim, he informed the commissioners that

during the year, two pupil teachers and two monitresses were promoted to the higher office of assistant teachers in other Model Schools. Seventeen pupil teachers, five monitors, and nine senior pupils, from the male department, and eighteen monitresses and ten pupils from the female department were appointed to the charge of ordinary National Schools, making a total of sixty-three persons who left the establishment during the year prepared for the office of teacher. Owing to the excellent method of teaching and school management acquired at this institution, the services of young persons who have been trained in it are eagerly sought for by the patrons of National Schools in different parts of Ireland, and in nearly all instances a local endowment, ranging from £5 to £15, is guaranteed by the managers, exclusive of school fees and Board's salary.<sup>22</sup>

In 1862, Patten reported that seventy-six 'left to take charge of schools'.<sup>23</sup> In 1863, while the number 'prepared ... for the office of teacher' dropped to fifty-four, the head inspector reckoned the average over the three years at sixty-four, and with a degree of justified chauvinism pointed out to the commissioners that

while all the District Model Schools throughout Ireland are said to furnish annually about 130 teachers for National Schools, one-half of this number has, on an average, for the past three years, been supplied by the Belfast Model School alone - or about one-tenth of the entire number (estimated at 700) of new teachers required annually for schools under the Board.<sup>24</sup>

However, the decline in the number of junior staff continued - due in part to an acknowledged difficulty in finding suitable male replacements. By 1865, only 'seventeen members [of the junior staff] left to accept appointments as teachers in National Schools'.<sup>25</sup> In 1868, thirteen pupil teachers left the institution, of whom just eight entered the teaching profession. The situation with the female paid monitors was more satisfactory. One was appointed to the vacant assistant-teachership in the girls' model school, while a further

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<sup>22</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-eighth report ... 1861*, App. C, p. 132.

<sup>23</sup>C.N.E.I., *Twenty-ninth report ... 1862*, App. B, p. 72.

<sup>24</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirtieth report ... 1863*, App. B, p. 27.

<sup>25</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-second Report ... 1865*, App. B, p. 80.



three obtained positions in national schools, with a fifth 'engaged to teach in a ladies' institute'.<sup>26</sup> Later years witnessed further disimprovement, particularly with regard to the male pupil teachers. For example, in 1873 when eleven of their number left, only four were appointed to national schools, and one went on to training. Of the remaining six, two were reported as working for the Excise, three had 'gone to business', and one was employed by the Ulster Railway Company. Of the four monitresses that left, two were appointed to national schools, and two 'left the service of the Board'.<sup>27</sup>

The halcyon days of Belfast District Model School, the Board's flagship, were relatively short-lived. Indeed, the returns to the Powis commission, which revealed that only 36.7 per cent of those trained at the school (*Table VII*) remained in the service, strongly suggest that even though the annual supply figures were impressive, many rapidly sought employment elsewhere. By the second half of the 1860s, before the school had been ten years in existence, difficulties were experienced in attracting suitable replacements for vacancies on the junior staff. Consequently, the numbers prepared for teaching dropped dramatically, and, of those who completed the course a growing proportion, in line with the general trend, chose not to practise as teachers.

#### ***10.4 Clonmel - a case study***

This trend can be further illustrated by reference to Clonmel District Model School, the only school for which a comprehensive list of male junior staff appears to exist. While not entirely reliable in that it tends to overstate the level of on-going attachment to service under the Board, it confirms the suspicion that the rate of attrition was significantly under-reported in official annual returns.

Significantly, the Clonmel record was generated not by the inspectors but by its headmaster, Terence Smyth, and it was prompted by his efforts to receive a preferential retirement gratuity. Smyth, a Roman Catholic, was headmaster of the school from its opening in 1849. In his submission to the Board in 1877, he listed all members of the junior staff, totalling 151, and, where known to him, information on their destinations. The information he offers varies in quality but his detailed personal observations on the fortunes of many of his former pupils more than compensates. One former pupil teacher, John Kelly, was recorded as one of the 'six hundred' at Balaclava. As well as his listing of junior staff, Smyth also named those ordinary pupils 'who got good situations'. Excluding those who joined the

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<sup>26</sup>C.N.E.I., *Thirty-fifth Report ... 1868*, App. B, p. 117.

<sup>27</sup>C.N.E.I., *Fortieth Report ... 1873*, p. 109.

junior staff, a further 146 were listed in this category. Among these was Pierce Nagle, the 'notorious' informer at the Fenian trials, of whom Smyth wrote: 'I suspected, as a pupil though very clever and intelligent, he would not turn out well. Might he was [n]ever a pupil of mine'.<sup>28</sup> It cannot be claimed that the situation which pertained in the Clonmel school was representative of model schools generally, but, considering that 78% of the junior staff from this institute abandoned teaching, which is a significantly higher proportion than that found generally in the longest established model schools, the information is significant.

A number of Smyth's dealings with the Board have been noted earlier. These generally related to disciplinary matters regarding neglect of teaching duties and irregularities in the manner in which the residential quarters were conducted. Considering the length of time he had held the position, the number of infractions attributed to him was not great, nor, in comparison to some committed by others, were they particularly serious. However, the number of complaints made against him rose in the 1870s. Neglect of the pupil teachers and want of proficiency detected amongst the students comprised the bulk of the criticisms levelled against him.<sup>29</sup> By 1877, both the head and district inspectors, Sharkey and Purser, were united in the belief that 'the inefficiency of the school [was] not temporary but chronic'. They considered Smyth 'no longer equal to the duties of his post', and '[believed] that the interests of the school urgently [called] for a change of head master'. On the foot of this report, Purser was directed to call upon Smyth to resign. In this he was successful, and was in a position, by 28 November, to forward Smyth's letter of resignation, with a recommendation that 'his case be favourably considered for a retiring gratuity' on the grounds that he had given long service and '[had] trained many young men for the civil service and other public employments ...'.

Smyth appeared to accept his situation, seeking only, ostensibly at least, to maximise his retirement gratuity. This was to be expected considering that, at sixty-four years of age, he would find it difficult to obtain alternative employment, and he still had a wife and two dependent children to support. He based his case on two grounds - 'the peculiar and exceptional circumstances' that applied to Clonmel District Model School, and his success both as a teacher of his ordinary pupils and instructor to those undergoing the course of preparatory training for teaching. This first-hand account keenly describes the difficulties under which a model school headmaster, particularly a Roman Catholic, laboured in the face of constant clerical opposition. In summation, Smyth felt certain

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<sup>28</sup>The information on the destination of various members of the junior staff at Clonmel District Model School, and Smyth's annotated comments, are taken from ED9-21/2.

<sup>29</sup>N.A.I., ED9 - 21/2; ED9 - 704.

that if the real state of things were known to the Board the opinions formed of me would be completely changed. Instead of censure it would be acknowledged that I have deserved well [and that] I have done my duty.<sup>30</sup>

Overall, one is left with the distinct impression that he still entertained the prospect of a reversal of the Board's decision. In this, however he was mistaken. Following forty-one years' service, during which time his average annual emolument amounted to £157-14-8, he was awarded a retirement gratuity of £654-11-10, on condition, *inter alia*, that he give up possession of the schoolmaster's residence.

Smyth's observations on the members of his junior staff when combined with the data given in the *Annual Reports* allow one to trace, in varying degrees of detail, 197 members of the junior staff from the school's opening in 1849 to his resignation in 1877. He listed only those under his immediate tutorship - all male candidate teachers. Official records list a further 29 female members of the junior staff. These are obviously incomplete as the return to the Powis Commission, for the years 1849 to 1867, showed that 65 paid monitors had attended the school. It is highly probably that by far the greatest number of these were females. Even acknowledging these shortcomings, the information on the destination of the members of the junior staff at Clonmel District Model School is exceptional, and its importance is further enhanced by the very low number - just 9 per cent - for whom no initial destination was recorded.

In broad terms, approximately 60 per cent of the junior staff initially took up positions under the Board as teachers in national schools or they went direct to training college. In line with the general trends the highest level of attachment was found among those who secured posts in model schools. For those that went on for further training the subsequent destination for no more than half was teaching. This was particularly the case in respect of those that gained entry to the 'Special Class'.

When final recorded destinations are considered, it appears that of the 114 whose initial destination was under the Board - whether in teaching or in further training - 49, or 43 per cent, did not remain in the profession. This reduced the overall retention to 65 graduates, or 35 per cent. Among those who left, emigration was by far the greatest factor in drawing away practising teachers. It accounted for 23 of the 49 departures. When the figures for Clonmel, as a whole, are examined, the full effect of emigration and the lure of alternative

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<sup>30</sup>N.A.I., ED9-21/2

occupations is brought sharply into focus. Of the 197 named members of the junior staff, 45 emigrated, which is 3 more than the 42 who succeeded in securing positions outside of teaching in Ireland. When the incompleteness of the record is taken into account, there is every likelihood that withdrawals for economic reasons exceeded 50 per cent. This was a significantly higher figure than that recorded for trained teachers in the 1870s (*Table V*), and even exceeds that for the 1860s (*Table IV*). It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that for more than half the junior staff enrolled in Clonmel District Model School the course of preparatory teacher training was a vicarious means of acquiring an intermediate education.

Working from Smyth's submission, the retention figure for teachers trained in the Clonmel school was 35 per cent. This is at variance with the Board's returns to the Powis Commission, which suggest a figure of approximately 23 per cent (*Table VII*). There is no obvious single factor which might explain this discrepancy, but the following may have a bearing. Firstly, the records for the female members of the junior staff are very incomplete and are skewed towards the early years of the school. Secondly, it is questionable if Smyth was in a position to provide a complete list even of the males trained during the course of thirty years. More significantly, it is unreasonable to expect that, apart from his more illustrious past pupils, he would have been aware of subsequent employment history for the majority of those that initially chose teaching.

The findings of the head inspector, Timothy Sheahan, in reviewing the performance of the Clonmel school as a training institute between 1849 and 1855 would suggest that a retention figure of 35 per cent, even then, was not being achieved, and this was without subsequent destinations being taken into account. Sheahan stated that of the 101 trained, 'above half ... are now teachers'.<sup>31</sup> When examined more closely, it would appear that 48 out of 85 who were regarded as having completed their preparatory course of training remained in teaching. The retention rates for males and females differed significantly. Sixty-five per cent of males were practising as teachers under the Board, and just 46 per cent of females. Even at that, the figure for females was exceptionally high, in that it included 16 'candidate' or practising teachers, of whom 10 returned to their schools after their course of training. Based on these figures, the retention over all categories of junior staff was 56 per cent. When one applies the rate of loss to teaching indicated by the information on 186 members of the junior staff, a more accurate retention rate of just 32 per cent is indicated. Considering that these statistics relate to a period of relative disinterest on the part of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, the level of attrition, in a school which continued

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<sup>31</sup> C.N.E.I., *Twenty-second report ... 1855*, App. G, pp 267-8.

to attract lay members of that denomination into the ranks of its junior staff, can only have increased over the years. Of the 197 members of the junior staff listed, all but 52 were stated to be Roman Catholics. This would further suggest that Smyth was overplaying his success. On balance, the figures furnished to the Powis Commission would appear to indicate more accurately the level of retention. At the same time the general trends discovered are essentially correct, even though in absolute terms they may not be entirely reliable.

The figures for Ballymena District Model School, though, on the basis of individual listings, were greater than those for the Clonmel school, due to the scant detail provided, they are of little use for comparative purposes.<sup>32</sup> For just 106 of the 283 candidate teachers was a subsequent employment profile given, and, even then, the initial destination only was stated. Of the total, almost 80 per cent were recorded as securing teaching positions. On the face of it, this appears impressive. But, when one considers that for Ballymena the returns to the Powis Commission indicated an attachment rate of approximately one-third, it is fair to conclude that those for whom a subsequent employment profile was not provided - 177 or 62.5 per cent - did not seek employment in teaching. What is of more interest is the almost complete lack of reference to junior staff going direct from the school to either the 'Special Class' or the advanced training course. It is tempting to suggest that this had to do with the fact that, where recorded, 69 per cent of the junior staff were Protestant, and, consequently, did not experience difficulty in gaining employment, unlike their Roman Catholic colleagues for whom further training was either a procrastinatory tactic or an avenue to social mobility.

### ***10.5 Evidence to the Powis Inquiry***

Overall, the statistics, such as are available for the individual model schools, are broadly in line with the returns published by the Powis Commission. Their tendency to under-state the gravity of the situation has more to do with a lack of standardised form of presentation and the fitful inclusion of data than to any effort to suppress information. By 1870 it has become abundantly clear to all sides that, at best, one-third of junior staff from the various model schools had remained in teaching. They accounted for just 731 (9 per cent) of the 8,326 teachers in the Board's service - a situation which would not improve throughout the following decade. The modest impact of the model school training system on the supply

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<sup>32</sup>Data for Ballymena taken from the following C.N.E.I. reports: *Eighteenth report ... 1851*, App. B, pp 146-7; *Nineteenth report ... 1852*, App. H, pp 104-5; *Twenty-second report ... 1855*, App. G, p. 220; *Twenty-fifth report ... 1858*, App. B, p. 37; *Twenty-sixth report ... 1859*, App. B, p. 60; *Twenty-seventh report ... 1860*, App. C, p. 99; *Twenty-eighth report ... 1861*, App. C, pp 125-6; *Twenty-ninth report ... 1862*, App. B, p. 55; *Thirty-fifth report ... 1868*, App. B, p. 154.

and attachment of teachers to the Board's schools was but a small part of the more general crisis in teaching at the time. The various reasons, religious, economic, and social were vividly adverted to by various witnesses, from church and educational backgrounds, to the Inquiry.

Cardinal Cullen's concern that teachers should receive adequate remuneration has already been noted. This point was even more forcefully made by Bishop William Keane of Cloyne:

I think it very desirable that the question of salary of the teachers should be entertained by the commission. I think they ought to get more than they are getting, and that better provision should be made for their old age. They are a laborious, hard-working, and, on the whole, a well-conducted body of men, and when you take into account the working of the schools in detail .... that when a man gets to first of first, which is now £52 a year, that when he gets as high in the scale of promotion as that he cannot go higher, he is not as efficient a teacher as he had been when he was aspiring to that position. ... And I believe it would be desirable in that case to hold out to teachers some prospect of advancement in the shape of a reward for continued exertions, that is to say, let the school be examined...<sup>33</sup>

Keane, and other clerical witness, either ignored or overlooked the Board's point of view that its salary grant was merely a supplement to the expected local contribution and school fees. To have acknowledged this would have been tantamount to accepting a degree of responsibility for the plight of the teachers.

With respect to the low rate of retention, it fell to the Reverend John Scott Porter of Belfast to state the obvious. He left the commission in no doubt that the primary reason for the Board's failure to retain teachers in its service in that city was the poor rate of pay: 'many young men, after they have served for a time as teachers, go off to other employments in public offices, and clerks in mercantile offices ...'<sup>34</sup> In this he echoed the views of the Ulster teachers as expressed by their representative, Charles Matthews:

He[the national teacher] is generally found to make a good clerk ... He is a good accountant, and perhaps writes a good hand, and can spell well - even the lowest grade of teacher ... I think many adopt the profession for that purpose [improving one's situation in life], and make it a stepping-stone to something higher ...<sup>35</sup>

On the issue of pay and conditions, the attitude of Alexander Macdonnell, the resident commissioner, was the most difficult to understand. He accepted that teachers were underpaid, but he would not agree to a higher rate. Twenty pounds he suggested as an

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<sup>33</sup> Powis, iii, 683.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., iv, 790.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., iv, 803.

appropriate salary for those on the lowest classification. To pay them more 'would hold out an inducement to managers to appoint favourites of their own to these situations'.<sup>36</sup> This was to miss the point. Trained teachers were lured to other employments by the prospects of improved pay and conditions and the prospect of social advancement. A financial inducement contingent on increased workload was unlikely to prove acceptable.

Macdonnell was also unwilling to acknowledge the reality of the situation in his evidence on the effect of the religious prohibition. This was the greatest factor both in restricting the numbers who entered training, and in forcing many of those trained to seek alternative employment. While accepting that the representation of Roman Catholics on the staffs of the different model schools - 75 out of 190 - was 'not a safe state of things', and that the proportion of Roman Catholics in training had fallen considerably, he claimed that quite a number of those in training were from schools under lay patronage, both Protestant and Roman Catholic. Furthermore, he stated as his opinion that 'a good number of Catholic clerical managers allow their teachers to come to be trained.' With the possible exception of the Kerry diocese, under Bishop David Moriarty, this was a profoundly questionable assertion.<sup>37</sup> Quixotically, Macdonnell argued that Roman Catholics would in time accept the model school system as then constituted, comparing their attitude to that of the early hostility displayed by many Protestants to the early national system.<sup>38</sup>

The most graphic account of the effect of the clerical prohibition on Roman Catholics trained in model schools gaining employment in the profession was provided by Edward Sheehy, D.I. When asked why Cork District Model school had produced no teachers, he answered that anyone training there would not get a position in either the dioceses of Cloyne or Cork. Pupil teachers in West Dublin Model School similarly could not obtain employment as teachers in the city. Managers were confined to taking on teachers trained before 1862. Sheehy further stated:

The supply of teachers from Model Schools is practically cut off. There may be some exceptional cases. In the West Dublin Model School there are pupil teachers who must leave the establishment after having spent several years in training there. They can get no employment whatever as national teachers - they are in fact worse off than beggars, for they

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 1073.

<sup>37</sup>James F. Hogan, inspector for the Killarney district, reported in 1888 that the 'majority of teachers are trained ... [and were] never prevented from going to Marlborough Street from this diocese.' *Fifty-fifth report ... 1888*, App. B, p. 177. This claim rings true as Moriarty was approached by the government to act on the Powis Commission. He was dissuaded by Cullen (Emmet Larkin, *The consolidation of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1860-1870* (Chapel Hill and London, 1987), pp 499-501).

<sup>38</sup>*Powis*, iv. See Macdonnell's evidence, pp 1,060 (Q. 23790), 1,064 (Q. 23853), 1,068 (Q.s 23913, 23915), 1,069 (Q. 23922).

have trained up to a certain profession, and there is no employment for them in it. They won't be taken into any of the National schools.<sup>39</sup>

Under a system where teachers were condemned to penury and denied a realistic prospect of social advancement, the intelligent and the ambitious forsook the profession in large numbers. For those of the Roman Catholic faith, branded the pariahs of their people and not allowed to practise their intended employment, it is little wonder that the profession of national teacher held little appeal. For many the Board's training scheme, particularly that provided in its model schools, was seen as preparing the candidate for anything but teaching.

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<sup>39</sup>*ibid.*, p. 1172.



## Conclusion

The Fortescue proposals in 1866 constituted the first official acknowledgement that if model schools were to provide training for a meaningful number of candidate teachers the objections of the Roman Catholic episcopacy and clergy would have to be addressed. This could only be done through the recognition of non-vested denominational training schools under local management. The gradual, but inexorable move towards this position provided the material for a lengthy denouement.

### 11.1 The Final Act: 1866 - 1883

While reluctantly accepted by the Board in November 1866,<sup>1</sup> an opportunity to implement the Fortescue proposals did not immediately arise and the matter was left in abeyance for several years. The Powis Commission recommended that in certain circumstances existing model schools might be leased to any body 'applying for them as training schools, on easy terms, such as will provide for their maintenance and repair'.<sup>2</sup> However, this was not the path taken. When Alexander Macdonnell, for so long the *de facto* power on the Board, resigned as resident commissioner in 1872, his replacement was P.J. Keenan. This meant that for the first time the potentate at the centre of the administration was not only an enlightened educationalist, but also a Roman Catholic. It was also quite a dramatic development since Keenan's 1858 recommendations to the Board on the training question had been treated dismissively and all reference to them expunged from the annual *Report* as they involved 'an organic change in the system'.<sup>3</sup> Keenan's concern then was what he viewed as the 'inadequacy of the existing Training Department'. Besides proposing the sanctioning of non-vested model schools, he believed that each model school should be attached to a fully fledged training institution 'in which a person could receive the philosophical and professional training requisite to make him an accomplished teacher'. He described the existing scheme of training for candidate teachers as a 'minor object' and recommended instead that it should be 'handed over entirely, as is done in England and other countries, to the masters and mistresses of good ordinary national schools'.<sup>4</sup> His concern was not with the standard of training given in the model schools as such. Rather, it stemmed from the inability of the scheme to provide a sufficient number of properly trained

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<sup>1</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 13, 20, 27 and 30 Nov. 1866.

<sup>2</sup>*Powis*, i, 531.

<sup>3</sup>*M.C.N.E.I.*, 2 Dec. 1859.

<sup>4</sup>The suppressed section of Keenan's 1858 report is published in *Powis*, iv, 1311-2.

teachers. Fortescue was prompted by Roman Catholic hostility to resurrect Keenan's proposals on non-vested model schools but he overlooked the inspector's wider concern. Now, as resident commissioner, Keenan was in a position to have both considered anew. Government concern, quite possibly at his prompting, was also communicated to the commissioners by the chief secretary, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. In these circumstances it was inevitable that when, in 1874, the issue of reform of the training system was addressed that the inextricable link with the resolution of the religious question would be recognised. In November 1874 a committee comprising the Provost of T.C.D., John H. Jellett, and his fellow commissioners James Gibson, J.W. Murland and Keenan, was formed 'to inquire into the working of the Training School'. Basically, what was brought forward was a re-working of the Fortescue proposals of 1866, as endorsed by the Powis Commission, but this time applying them to training colleges. It recommended a non-denominational training system involving both non-vested colleges and the Board's own establishment in Marlborough Street. In effect, this was proposing that the arrangements for the management of the training colleges should replicate those for the elementary schools. While described as non-denominational in that they would be open to all faiths without prejudice, the non-vested colleges would, in effect, be under denominational control. This scheme was presented to the Board on 1 December, where, after the defeat of an amendment in the name of Judge James Lawson claiming that the proposal, if adopted, 'would be calculated to subvert the fundamental principles of National education', Keenan's motion was carried by ten votes to seven. An intriguing aspect of this development, and one that serves to underline the powerful position of the resident commissioner, was the recorded opposition of the other three members of the committee to Keenan's proposal.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the decision of the Board, no action was taken to implement the proposal, as for a second time political fortunes favoured those opposed to change. The replacement of Gladstone's Liberal administration with Disraeli's conservative government in 1874 placed them in position of influence, and, as a result, the plan was shelved for the time being.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, the Board's acceptance of Keenan's proposal had far-reaching implications for the training role of model schools. With the acceptance that teacher training could be better accommodated in denominational training colleges, official thinking was drawn increasingly to the English system with the inevitable downgrading of the model schools. Increasingly, they were seen as no more than good ordinary national schools whose teachers

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<sup>5</sup>M.C.N.E.I., 10 and 24 Nov., 1 Dec. 1874.

<sup>6</sup>On this initiative see Tadhg Ó Ceallaigh, *Coláiste Phádraig - St. Patrick's College centenary booklet 1875 - 1975* (Dublin, 1975), pp 6-7.

were adjudged fit to instruct and to prepare paid monitors for entry to adult training colleges.

Frustrated by the lack of progress, Cardinal Cullen proceeded with his own plan for a teacher training college in Drumcondra under the supervision of the Vincentian Order. This was part of his overall intention of re-organising higher education without state aid. It opened on 31 October 1875, and offered a one-year course for up to seventy students.<sup>7</sup> An application, early in 1877, to the Board for aid towards an elementary 'practising' school attached to the college was eventually successful.<sup>8</sup> A subsequent request by the Reverend Dean Neville of the Roman Catholic University on behalf of the Roman Catholic divines, in February 1880, 'urging the necessity, as soon as possible, of some available system of training ... under the Board of national education' provided Keenan with the opportunity of reminding the government of the Hicks-Beach proposals of 1874.<sup>9</sup> The financial burden resulting from the operation of St. Patrick's demanded that the tone of the bishops' address be supplicatory. Even allowing for the return of Gladstone to power and his conciliatory approach to the Irish question, this request might have come to nothing. When it became obvious, however, that the Church of Ireland training college in Kildare Street was willing to accept denominational funding the government had freedom to act.<sup>10</sup> The decision of the General Synod was determined by factors other than the on-going difficulty in financing its own training institution. The broader financial implications of Church Disestablishment in 1869 and the favourable findings of the Powis Commission concerning denominational education encouraged a re-appraisal by the Church of Ireland of its position *vis-à-vis* the national system. This resulted in a marked willingness on the part of its patrons to have their schools recognised by the National Board.

The government response in March 1883, as enunciated by George Otto Trevelyan, the new chief secretary, was to propose the adoption of the English system of training. His proposals were considered by the Board with Keenan urging their adoption. Again Jellett spoke against, but, on a vote, the resident commissioner received overwhelming support. Ten of the commissioners present voted in favour, while the other three 'declined to vote'.<sup>11</sup> All, but a rump implacably opposed to any concession, were willing to consider some compromise in an effort to overcome the chronic shortage of trained teachers. It is fair to say that after twenty-five years Patrick Joseph Keenan had got his way. Henceforward,

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp 5-8.

<sup>8</sup>M.C.N.E.I., 16 and 30 Jan., 6 Feb. 1877.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 17 Feb. 1880.

<sup>10</sup>See Susan M. Parkes, *Kildare Place*, pp 57-62; M.C.N.E.I., 9 and 30 Jan. 1883.

<sup>11</sup>M.C.N.E.I., 20 Mar. 1883.

training in a denominational college under local management was an option. Under the new arrangements, preparatory training in a model school conferred no advantage on the candidate over that received by those that underwent the course for paid monitors in selected ordinary national schools. The model schools' generic relationship with the now-discarded principle of 'united' education denied them a meaningful role in this initiative. While they could still fulfil a function through providing candidates for training in the non-denominational Central Training Establishment, their continued operation was no longer of any concern to those committed to the denominational option. In the process of overcoming the religious obstacle, the Board's network of preparatory training schools had been by-passed.

### **11.2 The Status of the National Teacher: Social and Professional**

Much concern was expressed from the last quarter of the eighteenth century about the influence of the teacher. Those working in the rickety official network of parish schools, while in the main morally beyond reproach, were found to be inadequately rewarded and, as a consequence, lacking in motivation. More numerous by far were the teachers in private schools. They catered for all classes and all creeds, but particularly the lower strata of society, and, outside of Ulster, were predominantly the recourse of Roman Catholics. Virtually unregulated - though the extent to which local religious interests exercised a supervisory function is unclear - they were characterised by great diversity with regard to the curriculum taught, the competence of the practitioner, and his attitude towards civil and religious authority. The most serious reservations were expressed on this last matter, it being widely held that the teachers of these schools were, in many instances, the sources of local dissension and subversion. Their influence ranged beyond the confines of the schoolhouse and was capable of inculcating an attitude of active disloyalty among the community at large. In a period when the education of the masses was viewed, initially, with the utmost suspicion, and, later, as a panacea - the agent *par excellence* in the cause of social regeneration - its control and regulation became an absolute imperative. The relatively long gestation period in the formulation of an acceptable government initiative in Ireland was due largely to the religious difficulty arising from the privileged position accorded the members and institutions of a minority religion. The delegation of the duty to a voluntary philanthropic lay association - popularly remembered as the Kildare Place Society - proved to be a false dawn. The growing dominance of fundamentalist religious views within its ranks foredoomed its efforts to maintain acceptability. However, educationally its endeavours had an enduring influence on its successor, the National Board of Education, particularly as to its approach to teacher training. The emergence of the Kildare Place Society coincided with the widespread enthusiasm for the monitorial system

of teaching. The early liberal leanings of the society favoured the adoption of the Lancastrian version. Its cheapness, its limited curriculum, and its unquestioned acceptance and defence of the existing social order were in tune with the economic and political thinking of the time. The stress it placed on the acquisition of method, from which there should be no deviation, demanded training. The methods of the Kildare Place Society became the methods of the National Board - likewise the expectations. Foremost among these was the belief that the gap in status between that of the teacher and the commonalty should remain slight. A restricted curriculum combined with meagre remuneration ensured that, for the majority of teachers, professionally and socially, this would be the case.

The Powis Commission findings bore powerful testimony to the detrimental effects of this attitude. Thomas Harvey, an assistant-commissioner, reported on the state of elementary education in the midlands where the highest salary for a male teacher was £52, and that for a female, £42. Various gratuities and premiums could be earned and Harvey did on occasions encounter teachers earning £70 annually. However, these were 'comparatively rare' since for a majority of the teachers' 'emoluments from government aid, were, as a rule, the amount of his salary', with little by way of school fees or supplementary local aid.<sup>12</sup> In the northwest, Thomas Sidgreaves reported that 'great dissatisfaction ... [prevailed] among the teachers in respect of remuneration ...'. Consequently, many of those who might otherwise have adopted teaching as an occupation '[took] to anything else they [could] get in preference', and that those unsuccessful in obtaining work that paid commensurate with their ability in Ireland emigrated to America.<sup>13</sup> In Dublin, Thomas King discovered that teachers, 'almost without exception, complained of the insufficiency of their salaries'. Anyone showing promise '[preferred] to adopt any other occupation ...'.<sup>14</sup> W. Scott Coward, who was based in Cork, expressed still more succinctly and graphically the link between poor pay and low status. From his inquiries in the Cork district, he believed that national teachers, as a rule, came from the lower classes: in towns, the sons and daughters of small shop-keepers and tradesmen; in the country, of peasants, farmers or agricultural labourers. Not only did the rates of pay 'depress the teacher's life', but it had serious consequences also for his standing within the community:

They also affect his position, by putting him in unfavourable contrast with mechanics, the Constabulary, and even with agricultural labourers. The majority of teachers receive salaries inferior to those of the Constabulary, and in the case of assistant teachers, not exceeding those of well-paid farm servants. ... The disproportion between the remuneration of the national teachers and others less well educated tends to bring them into contempt. They are

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<sup>12</sup> Powis, ii, 492.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 270.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp 11-2.

looked upon as men who can do nothing else, and so are obliged to be content with inferior wages. ... then again, their poverty keeps them down in habits, in manners, and in thought, to the level of those who surround them, and to whom they ought to be superior, if their influence is to be of the best kind.<sup>15</sup>

Arising out of the marginal station of teachers, there was a general perception abroad that teaching was the refuge of those unable to earn a living by manual labour due to delicacy and/or physical defects.<sup>16</sup> Coward's citation of the humpbacked master on Sherkin Island and his colleague in the girls' school, who 'had lost a leg and had to go on crutches', were extreme cases, but his general observation that 'no great care seems to be taken to select the best persons possible in every respect to fill the important post of teacher' was well founded.<sup>17</sup> D.C. Richmond's summation of the situation in the Belfast district applied equally in other areas: he was of the belief that 'national teachers generally ... [are] ... quite as intelligent a body as we have any right to expect, considering the emoluments offered to them'.<sup>18</sup>

Besides low pay and low status, a further factor found by the Powis Commission to deter the able and ambitious from contemplating teaching as a career was the lack of job security. The power of summary dismissal in the hands of a capricious manager was a grievance keenly felt. In the report of James Stuart Laurie the teacher was referred to as 'a tenant at will', which was a more invidious position than that of the tenant farmer, 'which is loudly proclaimed'. For while the latter might succeed in acquiring land elsewhere, the teacher 'with blemished reputation' was fully aware that 'dismissal by one patron will be held to be a strong ground for ... rejection by another'.<sup>19</sup> It was also identified by teachers as limiting their ability to act as professionals within the school, since it meant they were ever mindful that any dispute either with parents or manager could undermine their tenure. D.C. Richmond believed that at its most extreme this apprehension not only generated feelings of insecurity it also, '[promoted] a spirit of discontent', and that together 'they tend to sour the character and depress the spirits ...'.<sup>20</sup> Confirmation of this fear was borne out by the testimony of four teachers, each a provincial representative, to the Powis Commission. Only the Ulster delegate mentioned the matter of summary dismissal directly. The others claimed it was of little or of no consequence, but it was alleged that they chose consciously to avoid referring to this matter in deference to their Roman Catholic managers.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp 127-9.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 294.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>21</sup>*Powis*, i, 377; see also *Powis*, iv, 1113.

One very important respect in which comment on the character of the teachers in 1870 differed greatly from that at the beginning of the national system was the absence of comment to the effect that the general body of teachers were either morally irresolute or in any way subversive. Apart from Cardinal Cullen's repetition of an allegation made in parliament by Myles O'Reilly, M.P. for Longford, that many 'superficially-educated young men [that had been trained in model schools] were connected to Fenianism', and that 'a lodge of female Fenians' had been established in the central training establishment, there was no imputation of disloyalty. Even O'Reilly's assertion was qualified. He accepted that 'these training schools' were not 'hot-beds of Fenianism'.<sup>22</sup> In fact the Board was happy to attest to the trustworthiness of the overwhelming number of its teachers during this period of heightened tension. The Fenian conspiracy it described as 'the most artful and seductive of all the political agitations ... a system that recognises the schoolmaster as a political power, and tries by flattery to win him over to the ranks of revolution'. And while pained to admit that 'as many as thirty-seven national teachers [had] been arrested' in connection with 'Fenianism', it pointed out that half this number had been arrested on suspicion only, and was not without hope 'that of this the great majority will be found innocent men'. The Board was so confident that 'as a body, the national teachers of Ireland are loyal men' that it reviewed their engagement in all instances of 'political commotion' - 'the Tithe agitation, the Repeal agitation, the agitation of 1848' - since the establishment of the national system:

1. The Tithe agitation did not produce a single case of complicity on the part of a national teacher.
2. The Repeal agitation produced only three or four subjects amongst the teachers for the animadversion of the Board.
3. The Young Ireland rebellion brought forth only two who were known to show sympathy with the movement.<sup>23</sup>

In this respect, at least, it could be claimed that the national system had been successful. As a body, teachers were no longer an object of suspicion by the state.

It is difficult to know the extent to which the national system was responsible for this as the interests of the state and of the churches in the areas of political and social stability overlapped. The power of summary dismissal vested in religious patrons was important in engendering an attitude of deference, bordering on the obsequious, among the general body of teachers. While the Board expressed confidence in its teachers, it is doubtful if the

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<sup>22</sup> Powis, iv, 1226.

<sup>23</sup> C.N.E.I., *Thirty-third report ... 1866*, p. 31. For detail of the charges brought against those accused of 'Fenianism' see also p. 32.

Roman Catholic Church view was as positive. In a situation where tenure was at the whim of the local manager, the status of the teacher among its clerics cannot have been high. Cullen's comments to the Powis Commission on the need to limit the level of education available in national schools suggests that it should be no higher than those they taught. Education was not seen by him as a means of social elevation:

Too high an education will make the poor oftentimes discontented, and will unsuit them for following the plough, or for using the spade, or for hammering iron, or for building walls. The poor ought to be educated with a view to the place they hold in society, in which it will be impossible for them to cultivate the higher branches of literature and science.<sup>24</sup>

The experience of teachers elsewhere was not as bleak as that in Ireland. In France and Prussia the close association of the teaching body with the state, with the teacher placed almost in the category of civil servant, led to enhanced status even if in France the pecuniary reward was not sufficient to allow the teacher to live with dignity in his expected role. According to Singer the government was quite happy with the predicament in which the teachers found themselves: 'The teacher was neither bourgeois nor proletarian nor peasant. ... Lack of money kept the teacher out of the bourgeoisie; too much learning put him above the peasantry.'<sup>25</sup> In Prussia, the teacher appeared to an American visitor in the 1840s, to have both status and a salary commensurate with his station:

The Prussian schoolmaster devotes himself to teaching for life, because he knows that, for life, it will yield him an adequate support. The government assigns him a post, and this post it guarantees to him, during good behaviour. It supplies him with a house and garden, and encourages him to collect around him all the comforts of life. It secures, also, that his salary shall be punctually paid; ... The school is so connected with the Church, and so honoured by law as well as by usage, that the teacher is considered inferior only to the pastor.<sup>26</sup>

In the British Isles, only in Scotland did the status of the teacher approach that of his Prussian counterpart. Here the position of teacher in the parish and burgh schools was a much coveted office bringing with it a respect unknown throughout the rest of the United Kingdom. This was due to a great extent to the high academic standards of the teachers, many of whom were graduates.<sup>27</sup> By contrast, the situation in England was more akin to that in Ireland. There, the Newcastle Commission of 1861 (on which the Powis

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<sup>24</sup> Powis, iv, 1241.

<sup>25</sup> Barnett Singer, *Village notables in nineteenth century France - priests, mayors, schoolmasters* (Albany, 1983), p. 130.

<sup>26</sup> Alonzo Potter and George B. Emerson, *The school and the schoolmaster - a manual for the use of teachers, employers, trustees, inspectors, etc.* (Boston, 1843), p. 241.

<sup>27</sup> See Douglas Myers, 'Scottish schoolmasters in the nineteenth century: professionalism and politics', *passim*, in Walter M. Humes and Hamish M. Paterson (eds), *Scottish culture and Scottish education 1800 - 1980* (Edinburgh, 1983), pp 75 - 92.



Commission was modelled), noted 'that a certain degree of dissatisfaction with their position exists amongst the trained teachers'. They complained that their salaries were below those commanded in comparable professions, and that 'their position in society is lower than it ought to be'. Unlike Ireland, the commissioners were hardly sympathetic to the plight of the teacher, and suggested that 'he fills a position, which if not socially all that he could wish, is universally recognised as respectable and useful'.<sup>28</sup> This attitude was reinforced by the Revised Code of 1862 introduced in the immediate aftermath of the Newcastle Commission. This, Matthew Arnold, the doyen of the English school inspectorate, claimed to have downgraded the trained teacher in status through a reduction in the rate of public expenditure on schools, the introduction of a 'payment by results' system, and a withdrawal from teachers, in Arnold's opinion, of 'all character of public servants'.<sup>29</sup> Only with the passing of the 1870 Education Act that ameliorated the more detrimental aspects of the earlier regulations did he again feel grounds for optimism.<sup>30</sup>

Low social status on its own was sufficient to militate against professional advancement. But when taken in conjunction with the weakness of the training on offer, the restricted curriculum, and the ease of entry into teaching, it was never likely that the Irish national teacher would enjoy a high professional status in the mid-nineteenth century. Indeed, the very success of the national system as evidenced by the rapid growth in the number of schools connected with the Board combined with the relatively small throughput of trained teachers negated efforts to increase the proportion of trained teachers. In fact the disparity between the proportion trained and those untrained widened. The short course of training - it never exceeded five months - for which there was some justification at the initial stages of the national system, was regarded throughout as insufficient. Efforts to address the problem through broadening the scope of the preparatory training programme were counter-productive in that they permitted, if not encouraged, entry into teaching of many, at best, imperfectly prepared. These, especially as the position of the Roman Catholic Church hardened, had no opportunity of ever undertaking the advanced course of training. And, for those that did, it was pursued with the intention of enhancing their prospects of alternative employment.

The course of training itself came in for highly critical comment in evidence to the Powis Commission. The brevity of the course, the questionable relevance of much of its content,

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<sup>28</sup>Herbert S. Skeats, *Popular education in England: being an abstract of the report of the royal commissioners on education ...* (London, 1861), pp 19 - 21.

<sup>29</sup>Matthew Arnold, *Reports on elementary schools 1852 - 1882* (first published 1889, London, 1910), p.103.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 145.

the shortcomings of professors, and the imbalance between theory and practice were adverted to by a number of witnesses.<sup>31</sup> No effort was made to address the various identified weaknesses in the training system that had been brought to the attention of the commissioners by Rev James McGauley in 1855. He produced evidence in support of his contention that the Irish system was 'far behind other countries in many things connected with the training of teachers'.<sup>32</sup> One witness to the Powis Commission, Edward Sheehy, was in the unique position of having been an assistant professor in training before undertaking the duties of district inspector. As such, he was able to speak with some authority on the overall influence of the training programme in practice. His comments were not encouraging as to its effectiveness. Of teachers he had examined before and after training he did not think 'they had derived much benefit as practical instructors', and further stated that in his inspectorial district he had had 'to make frequent reports as to the inefficiency and incompetency of trained teachers'.<sup>33</sup> More worrying was the opinion that he formed following a survey of 101 teachers - trained and untrained - in his district. Not only did he adjudge a greater proportion of the trained to be inefficient in comparison to those without Board training, but declared it 'a remarkable fact that some of the best teachers in my district are untrained'.<sup>34</sup> In his elaboration on this claim it becomes clear that the 'untrained' were teachers associated with convent schools. Of these, in general, he claimed that they were so well prepared they made excellent teachers, with some of them after less than a year in charge of their own schools out-performing the highest ranked trained teachers.<sup>35</sup> Sheehy was not alone in making this claim. His fellow inspectors, Cornelius Mahony and John Edward Sheridan, held equally high views on teaching in convent schools and the preparatory training given to the monitors.<sup>36</sup> Thomas O'Hara, then district inspector in the Clonmel district, concurred: he endorsed Sheehy's concerns over the inadequacy of the training given, lamenting, in particular, the failure to establish a 'special professorship of school-mastership'. Such was the poor preparation given that he could discern very little difference between trained and untrained teachers. He went so far as to suggest that lower ranked teachers were often more efficient.<sup>37</sup> Central to the problem was the emphasis the teacher classification examinations placed on academic achievement at the expense of practical ability. The perception was that those attaining the highest

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<sup>31</sup> Powis, iii and iv. See in particular the evidence of P. W. Joyce, iii, 272 - 5; J.W. Kavanagh, iii, 525 -7; W.H. Newell, iv, 1099 - 10; Thomas O'Hara, iv, 1240; Daniel O'Sullivan, iii, 312; Edward Sheehy, iv, 1164 - 76; John E. Sheridan, iii, 253.

<sup>32</sup> C.N.E.I., *Twenty-second report ... 1855*, App. G., p. 168.

<sup>33</sup> Powis, iv., 1165.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 1168.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 1171.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., iii., 251 and 748.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., iv., 1209.

ranking were over-qualified for the profession and less likely to afford it proper attention, 'being more intent on improving their own scholarship'.<sup>38</sup>

Such criticism did nothing for the professional status of the teacher, especially as it came from what was regarded as an informed source. It would be reasonable to expect that training in one's area of endeavour should increase expertise and understanding, and enhance the prospects of elevated professional standing, as Penelope Corfield's definition of a professional occupation as 'a skilled tertiary-sector occupation ... organised around a formal corpus of specialist knowledge with both a theoretical and a practical bearing, and very often a significant admixture of the two ...' suggests.<sup>39</sup> Teacher training aimed to satisfy these criteria. But there was one other factor that was to prove crucial and over which teachers had no control - that of regulation. Unlike the self-regulating 'learned professions' of the church, medicine and law, and many of the new professions spawned by the increasing specialisation of the nineteenth century, teaching depended on state support to underpin its claim to professionalism. Perkin in his definition of a professional society stressed that the chances of any one group achieving such a status were 'enhanced by strategies of closure'.<sup>40</sup> Only by taking control of the numbers entering the profession and, through a common course of training, shrouded in arcana, and leading to certification, could the practitioners promote the idea of an indispensable service that could be provided solely by them. Teachers did not of course control the numbers entering the profession, and this, according to Perkin, was crucial to their failure to raise their status to that of the higher professions. This became even more pertinent with the expansion in the provision of elementary education brought about through government patronage.<sup>41</sup> In Scotland the high status of the teacher before government intervention was admitted by all. But, the efforts of Scottish teachers to achieve independence for their profession ended in failure. This was due, in large part, to government intervention in the 1830s in an attempt to cope with population growth and the social dislocation brought about by industrialisation. This led it to support a much restricted curriculum, that had the effect of lowering the status of the profession. It must also be recognised that internal problems within the Scottish Church in the 1840s and the emergence of three distinct groups with the Educational Institute of Scotland were important contributory factors. Overall, it is suggested that they, like the majority of teachers elsewhere, 'had to content themselves with the lofty but insubstantial rhetoric of professionalism'.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., Observation of Edward Sheehy, 1166.

<sup>39</sup>Penelope J. Corfield, *Power and the professions in Britain, 1700 - 1850* (London, 1995), p. 25.

<sup>40</sup>Harold Perkin, *The rise of professional society - England since 1880* (London, 1990), p. 2.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., pp 350 - 1.

<sup>42</sup>Douglas Myers, 'Scottish schoolmasters in the nineteenth century - professionalism and politics' in Walter

In Ireland, the virtual absence of any regulation, other than that pertaining to morals, had serious negative implications for the professional status of the teacher. Government unwillingness to make adequate provision for training, and an over-reliance on courses of a purely preparatory nature to make up the short-fall, ensured that throughout the period of this study, untrained teachers outnumbered those trained. Mounting hostility on the part of the Roman Catholic hierarchy towards the entire government training scheme and the freedom of local managers to appoint whomsoever they wished exacerbated the problem. This inability, or indeed unwillingness, to regulate entry into the profession restricted its appeal as a career. At its most extreme, Cardinal Cullen promoted a totally *laissez-faire* attitude towards entry into the profession, once moral requirements were met. Resonant, ironically, of the pre-regulatory hedge school days he advocated

[letting] the people give the certificates themselves. If the children are properly taught the schools will be well frequented; if the master be unfit to teach, he will soon be without scholars.<sup>43</sup>

Contending that the worth of a teacher could only be judged by the results achieved rather than the level of training acquired, he urged the Board to

give as much liberty as possible; let every one turn to be a schoolmaster if he can. If the inspector finds he is not capable of teaching let him report him, and let the Board withdraw his salary.<sup>44</sup>

In general, teaching was viewed by many as a way station to something better. Poor pay and conditions militated against a healthy morale amongst teachers. The preponderance of untrained within the ranks and the limited nature of the education provided lessened the impact of elementary teachers on society. All these factors certainly raised a large doubt in the public mind as to status - both social and professional.

### ***11.3 Model Schools and Teacher Training***

By the time of the Powis Commission in the late 1860s it was accepted by the National Board of Education that there would be no further expansion of the model school network, though the geographical distribution of this network was anything but uniform. A variety of factors influenced the Board in its choice of locations - recommendations by individual

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M. Humes and Hamish M. Paterson (eds), *Scottish culture and Scottish education 1800 - 1980* (Edinburgh, 1983), passim.

<sup>43</sup> Powis, iv, 1202.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., iv, 1263.

inspectors, memorials supported by a large cross-section of the community's higher social strata, representations by powerful individuals and groups, and concerted opposition by Roman Catholic religious interests. Later in the period, an attempt to redress this geographic and religious imbalance impelled the commissioners to choose locations for which true prospects of success could never be reasonably entertained. Within the Board, during times of relatively rapid expansion of the network, a sub-committee was entrusted with the task of making recommendations. At other times, it is unclear how applications were assessed and why some were preferred over others, but the attitude of the resident commissioner, no matter what the origin of the application, was crucial.

The task of establishing and operating this network of schools involved the Board in a considerable expansion of its role. Individual inspectors took on the task of management for the schools in their own areas. This involved regulating every facet of the day to day arrangements - domestic organisation, finance, discipline, staff appointments, selection of junior staff, curriculum, course of training, examination and close monitoring. In general, these duties were attended to assiduously. In the area of property acquisition and building, the Board's inexperience was very evident. From the start there was an inability to control costs. Spiralling expenditure, due principally to a penchant for the grandiose, resulted in the Treasury's insistence on the transfer of responsibility to the Board of Public Works. Even here control was weak. High running costs for the existing model schools and a sense of foreboding with regard to the cost of further expansion represented one of the critical and irremediable concerns that guided the decision not to entertain future enlargement.

Another factor was the stance of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. While initially neutral, the hierarchy was increasingly hostile from 1850. By 1863 nothing less than their 'destruction' was demanded by a united hierarchy. This outright rejection, more than anything else, brought home to the government and to the Board the absolute folly of expecting the existing model schools to play a meaningful role in elementary education. Moreover, the determined stance of the Roman Catholic hierarchy commanded support amongst many of the influential laity and ensured that these schools could never be promoted as exemplars of 'united' education. Board profligacy with respect to expenditure on all aspects of their operation, along with singular expectations, ensured that the juxtaposing of the model schools and ordinary national schools was irrational, if not disingenuous.

On the question of their preparatory training function why was so little achieved by the model schools into which so much by way of resources and finance was poured? The simplest answer is that of the 2,304 pupil teachers and monitors trained in model schools

only 731 were found by the Powis Commission to have remained in the Board's service. Its explanation for this was equally superficial. It was of the opinion that pupil teachers in model schools, attended principally by children of the middle-class, were drawn from 'too high a social stratum' and that those trained '[despised] the lowly lot of the ordinary master'.<sup>45</sup> There is little direct evidence that such social prejudices were of significant relevance in deterring suitable candidates from teaching, and, indeed, the Powis report is contradictory on this score in inferring that the teaching staff - senior and junior - were of a rank inferior to that of the pupils.<sup>46</sup> Difficulties were at times experienced in filling vacancies among the ranks of the junior teachers, necessitating the recruitment on occasion of children of middle-class parents to fill the gaps. Instead, it was primarily economic and religious factors that determined their fate - matters over which the management and staff of the model schools had no control. These influences were not addressed in any depth by Cowie and Stokes, instead they focused narrowly on minutiae. Even in this area their approach was flawed and their assessment unfair. It should be recalled that their professional background was in the English denominational system and that they displayed little sympathy for or understanding of the diametrically opposite approach pursued by the model schools. Furthermore, it appears that they were not in fact chosen by the commissioners but had offered their services. Their motivation for this was to make available their expertise, and, 'being already in the Civil Service of the Crown', to save the state expense.<sup>47</sup> By far the most disappointing aspect of the report of the two assistant commissioners on model schools had to do with their teacher training role - the very area in which they assured the commission their greatest expertise lay. Instead of a comprehensive evaluation of the programme - covering junior staff selection, the course followed, the training provided, the results achieved - they contented themselves with dismissing the preparatory teaching programme on the grounds that training in model schools attended by middle-class children did not fit the candidate teacher for employment in the ordinary national school. Expanding on this point, the report contended later that differences between model schools and ordinary national schools in the areas of management, religious instruction, conditions of school work and remuneration were held to be additional objections to their suitability for training.<sup>48</sup> In proposing a solution the two English inspectors could not see beyond the English system:

The end proposed might ... be more safely, more surely, and more cheaply reached, by confining preparatory training to the best of ordinary schools, and by prolonging the length

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<sup>45</sup>*Powis*, i, pt. 2., 761.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 761.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 727.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 760.

and improving the conditions of the service of candidate teachers in them. Managers, if they had the privilege of recommendation, would find for this class candidates with the needful tastes, character and disposition, who remaining under their parents' care and acquiring in the day school actual experience of the labour and trials of a teacher's life, would be prepared in virtuous perseverance to face as trained teachers the realities of their future career.<sup>49</sup>

Not surprisingly, considering the scant evidence produced of inefficiency in the area of training, no comment on it was included in the section of the 'Historical Sketch' dealing with the operation of the model schools.<sup>50</sup> More significantly, also omitted from this synopsis was any reference to favourable testimony by a number of witnesses to the Inquiry who were otherwise critical of the training system. Even Bishop Patrick Dorrian of Down and Connor, who expressed grave concerns over the treatment of Roman Catholics in Belfast District Model School, was willing to agree that 'a great many good teachers have come from model schools and have been trained in them'.<sup>51</sup> The tenor of the Cowie - Stokes report was distinctly unsympathetic. Favourable comments were few, while those of an unsavoury or unhelpful nature could always be supported by apposite observations and embarrassing incidents. Its selective nature serves only to lend credence to the suspicion that the task was approached with a degree of ingrained partiality. An examination of records relating to the selection, training and supervision of junior staff suggests that model schools satisfactorily fulfilled their preparatory training role to a far greater extent than it was then acceptable to admit.

It was expected that all applicants for selection to the junior staff of the various model schools should have attained an agreed minimum level of scholarship. It was anticipated that this would be ascertained through oral and written examinations. Invariably, where the number of candidates exceeded the vacancies, this was the procedure adopted. However, religious and economic factors beyond the control of the model schools compelled inspectors to alter their approach, and, at times, lower their standards. Examination gave way to recommendation based on experience and observation. Potential, rather than achievement, proved acceptable. The perceived need to maintain a certain 'teaching power' within the school, and the absolute requirement that a pre-ordained religious ratio be upheld had consequences both as to the ability and the social status of the selected candidates.

For all that entered the model schools as members of junior staff, a close compliance with the regulations governing discipline and routine was expected, and, apart from minor

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 761.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., i, 208 - 20.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., iii, 359.

infractions and a small number of notorious incidents, there can be little criticism of the system of supervision. Even Cowie and Stokes accepted as much, admitting that 'no system can calculate upon being wholly free ... of occasional scandals'.<sup>52</sup> Overall, the attitude towards the religious beliefs of the students attempted to be neutral but supportive. Not unexpectedly, in Ulster religious tensions and sectarian bitterness in the community at large had its effect on inter-denominational relations in the close confines of some model schools, particularly the residential quarters. Without the close supervision provided, many of the Ulster schools would have proved unworkable as centres of united education from the very start. Kavanagh, who had a wide experience of their operation, stated to the Powis Inquiry that in model schools with which he was familiar he 'never knew any instances of attempts at proselytism' while he was in charge.<sup>53</sup> Even Cullen could go no further than to state that proselytism under the national system was passive rather than active.<sup>54</sup>

The advent of the first model schools coincided with a decisive move in teaching methodology to 'collective' teaching, a synthesis of the earlier monitorial method and the more recent 'simultaneous' or class teaching approach. It was strongly supported by influential individuals within the inspectorate and it provided the basis on which lessons were taught to the children and on which theoretical instruction in teaching was given to junior staff within the model schools. It was expected that the 'skill' of teaching, as opposed to the theory, would be acquired through observation and emulation under careful supervision by head master and inspector. This latter objective was, in the main, achieved and care appears to have been taken with lesson preparation under the guidance of the headmaster or an assistant, and regular monitoring by the inspector. However, the training programme in many cases fell short of what was expected in the area of theoretical understanding. There was an over-emphasis on the academic advancement of the pupil teacher. This was due in part to the relatively low level of ability of some of the junior staff, but also to an imbalance in the classification examination at the completion of the programme. Its emphasis was principally on testing knowledge of the Board's school books at the expense of competence to teach. The examination had both written and oral components, but even where teaching was touched upon in the latter approach the emphasis was still primarily on theory rather than on practice. The experience gained within the model school was taken to be sufficient. Being day students, the female monitors received less instruction in all aspects of teaching. They were left to their own devices to study and to prepare lessons during their free time. For the male pupil teachers, an appreciation of the

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., i, pt. 2., 761.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., iii, 537.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., iv, 1252.



economic ideological message was required, but it was not regarded as being of concern for the females, reflecting the negligible role accorded to women in political matters. The inspectorate was generally of the view that training was effective. The personnel of the Central Training Establishment were, likewise, satisfied with the level of preparation shown by those pupil teachers that later undertook the advanced training course. Testimonials from this quarter are somewhat suspect, considering that the model school training programme, with its over-emphasis on self-advancement to the detriment of practical preparation for teaching, tied in neatly with its own shortcomings. Nonetheless, it is significant that the criticism by Cowie and Stokes of the training provided by the model schools was based on their inherent unsuitability rather than any serious defects in the training programme.

Model schools did not fail to provide adequate preparatory training for candidate teachers. Yet, their impact on the status of the teacher - both social and professional - was undeniably slight. They never reached their target of 256 graduates annually. The failure to establish the intended number of model schools aside, other factors also came into play. The doubling of the term of the course from one to two years unaccompanied by a corresponding increase in overall capacity had a proportionate effect on throughput. The retrenchment pursued in 1863 brought about a further reduction. Despite denials by the Board, this action was taken in order to make finance available for the scheme of first class monitors in very large ordinary schools - primarily, if not exclusively, convent schools. But these were side-issues. The finding of the Powis Commission that barely one-third of those that graduated from the model schools remained in teaching is of far greater significance. The records show that it was not the operation of the model schools, despite shortcomings, nor any tinkering with the training programme that dissipated their thrust. Instead, one must look beyond the model schools to factors, economic and religious, in the broader social and political community. Almost from its inception, the management of ordinary national schools was denominational in character. While mixed attendance was not unusual examples of inter-denominational co-operation in the field of management were exceptional. Not only was it intended that model schools should operate on the principle of united education, their management structure did not allow for any local contribution. In this regard they were anything but exemplars for the national system. They were in fact exotica. On this basis alone they were guaranteed to arouse, initially, suspicion among a significant proportion of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and later, as cohesiveness was achieved under Cardinal Cullen, outright hostility. Roman Catholics on completion of their course of training were rendered unemployable as teachers. Furthermore, the academic education imparted to the candidate teachers in the model schools also fitted them for situations in life, other than teaching, that were more remunerative and of superior status. For many, whether Roman

Catholic or Protestant, preparatory training in model schools was training for anything but teaching. And for those that initially chose to teach, the position, because of its low status, lack of security, and inadequate financial reward, was regarded as but a temporary expediency. Teaching was held in low esteem from the point of view of social status and professional competence. Over a twenty-year period the investment of time, resources, finance and personnel in establishing and maintaining a network of model schools was an expensive and embarrassing failure. The hopes expressed by Head Inspector William McCreedy, as the first model schools opened their doors in 1849, never came close to realisation:

The importance of such institutions can hardly, indeed, be over-rated; for the advantages that they are calculated to confer on the localities where they are placed are, it must be evident to every one, of the utmost value, and the influence which they are destined, in no very long time, to exercise over the whole educational system of the country will certainly be very great; and if wisely managed and directed, as no doubt they will be, that influence, we may confidently trust, will be found to prove highly salutary and in every way beneficial.<sup>55</sup>

The expectation that preparatory training in model schools would become the means of entry to teaching was unfulfilled. Of the overall training provision that was shaped more by expediency than guided by a rationale based on professional requirements, the model school system was never more than a facet - in influence neither substantial nor enduring.

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<sup>55</sup>C.N.E.I. , *Sixteenth report ... 1849*, App. p. 235.

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